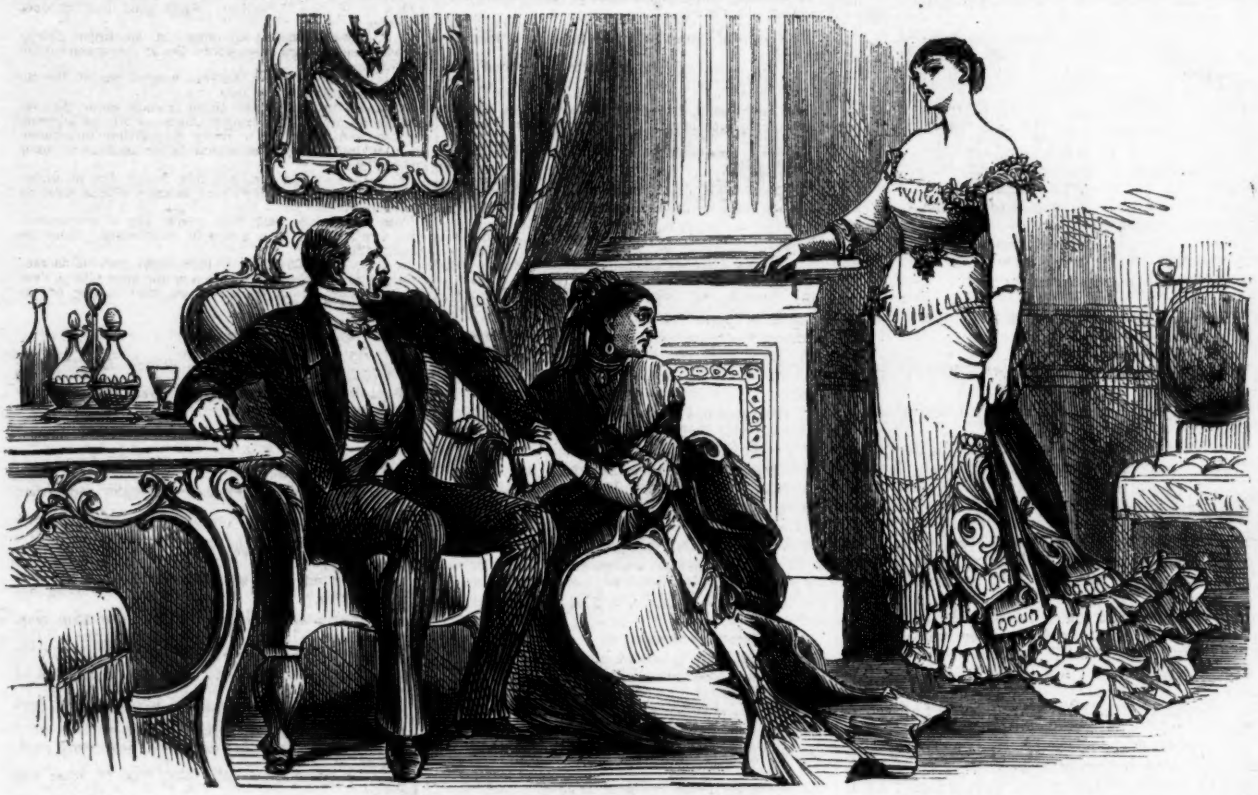
THE

LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 759—VOL. XXX.] FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 17, 1877. [PRICE ONE PENNY.



[THE VICTIM OF A VOW.]

THE LOVE PACT.

PROLOGUE.

"This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses. * * The heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here." SHAKESPEARE.

Few fairer spots of earth's varied surface may be found than that portion of Normandy which environs the fine old Château D'Aubrion. The tourist through France, who has perhaps traversed weary miles of treeless, featureless country, and passed over the monotonous smoothness of the Landes, experiences a sensation of glad surprise when he first sets foot in the pleasant Norman fields, views the noble trees and the quaint granges which remind an Englishman so strongly of the aspect of his native land, and often finds, embosomed in surrounding greenery, the picturesque chateaux which recall by their castellated structure the old warlike days of Huguenot struggle and Frondeur strife.

The family seat of the Marquis D'Aubrion was one of the finest examples extant of this peculiar style of architecture, where to somewhat of the massy strength of the mediæval castle more luxurious habits and improved tastes had added many of the adjuncts necessary to the comforts and elegancies of life.

Though the strong, iron-studded door was made for obstinate defence, yet drawbridge and portcullis were dispensed with. The small round turrets which sprang from each angle of the roof had the narrow shot-windows for archer or arbalister and the deep-cut machicolations through which the seething pitch or molten lead could be poured upon advancing assailants; but the lower chambers of the chateau, especially those which looked upon the broad expanse of emerald pasture land, whereon the deep-uddered, mild-eyed Norman kine grazed placidly, were glorious rooms, spacious, lofty, with fine old oak-panelled walls, ceilings painted by no mean artist, and mullioned windows filled with stained glass of richest dyes.

The couple who sat gravely thoughtful by the open casement of the principal drawing room of the chateau on this pleasant autumn evening looked worthy of their patrician surroundings.

Man and wife were they, and of the élite of the old French noblesse.

The Marquis D'Aubrion was a man over whom seventy summers had passed. Tall and spare of frame, erect still as a dart, having the haughty, aquiline Norman nose and eagle eye of deepest hazel, with which his heavy moustache and still abundant hair, both of snowy whiteness, contrasted well, the old man looked a fit descendant of his warrior line. He too had stood on many red battle fields: he had faced the Austrian on the tremendous three days when Leipsic's battle was contested through the long hours of slaughter—he had encountered the Cossack and the Russ by ensanguined Borodino—and had looked into the whites of English eyes on the fatal day when, in gore and battle smoke, the Imperial eagle sank, no more to rise.

The deep scar on the marquis's bronzed cheek, the empty sleeve where a right arm should have been, bore witness to the bravery of the old noble.

The face of the lady who sat opposite formed an admirable foil to her husband's indomitably haughty visage. The Marquise D'Aubrion was perhaps five-and-forty, but the years had borne more heavily upon her than they had done upon her lord. There were sufficient indications of youthful beauty remaining in her grave, sad face to enable the artist or the physiognomist to conjure up a phantasm of the lady's youthful beauty, for very lovely the marquise must once have been, with the rich, dark sweetness one meets in Italian or Spanish women or in those Languedocian faces which recall the fair to whom troubadour sang and for whom knight died exultingly. But the perfect oval of the face had shrunken flaccidly, the fine low forehead was deeply reticulated by wrinkles, the soft brown eyes were dimmed alike by shed and unshed tears. It was a Madonna face, but the visage of the Mary whose sorrowful beauty lives for us through the glorious pencil of Murillo.

Husband and wife sat long in the gathering twilight, silent, absorbed in deep thought. Through the open casement came the soft air, heavily laden with odours of autumn flowers from fair parterres which dotted the smooth-shaven lawn, mingled with the faint, subtle perfume of the geraniums whose scarlet glory flamed from window jardinières of costliest Sèvres.

A speck of rosiest sunset was dying in the western sky and sweet Hesper gleamed amid opal cloudlets above. It was a scene of ineffable and purest peace without—was it mirrored by a corresponding calm of the heart within?

Alas, no!

A little pendule of exquisite cinque-cento work, chiming with silvery tone, broke the intense silence of that room.

A shudder ran through the lady's frame; she

turned her rapt gaze from the sunset clouds and fixed her eyes upon the face of the marquis.

"Edouard," she said, in slow, broken accents, "in one short quarter of an hour Hélène will descend."

"Yes."

"It is not yet too late. Oh, my husband, once again I implore you to do nothing hastily. Write to the Englishman. Tell him Hélène is not here—is ill—is dying! Do anything to prevent the consummation of so cruel a wrong."

"Be calm, Cécile," the marquis replied, in icy tones. "All will be well. My resolve is taken irrevocably; my pledged word—the word of a D'Aubrion—was given."

The lady rose from her fauteuil and crossed to her husband's side, placing one small attenuated hand upon his broad shoulder.

"Monsieur le marquis, I entreat you," she said, "for my sake, to postpone this ill-omened contract. Surely some means may be found to do justice other than this sacrifice. What cares this foreigner for either Hélène or——"

"Hold, Cécile; remember your vow. That name must not be spoken here, No. The Englishman would doubtless fulfil his father's will. It is not a question of that. But do you imagine, in your woman's weakness, that I, the representative of our ancient line, will drag our house's honour in the dust?—that I would encounter the world's bitter scorn—my friends' angry reproaches in obedience to feminine caprice?"

"What has she done," exclaimed the marquise, "that she should be cast out thus like an accursed thing? Ah, my husband, have pity on her—have pity on me—have pity on Hélène!"

"I command your instant silence, madame," replied the marquis, harshly. "Pity! And for what cause—for whom? For you, the honoured mistress of this fair demesne, for my glorious Hélène, who will cement a life-long friendship by this alliance and place another coronet upon her brow—or even for that other, who, in her simple pleasures, shall yet receive abundant recompense from my hands for all she may unconsciously forfeit!"

"No, no!" cried the marquise, in anguished tones. "It is impossible! you cannot repay her for that which she has lost. Her fair young head has never leaned against a mother's bosom, her pure young brow has never been pressed by a mother's kiss. What shall make amends for such loss to her? And I—whose tears fall from morn to eve at the bitter thought that I may never see her face, never hear her voice—what remains for me?"

The lady's tones rose to a shrill wail.

"What remains?—Your husband and your daughter."

"My husband! who is so pitiless that the voice he once asseverated he loved may move him no more—Hélène! she of heart as cold as her father's, who has for me but little of a daughter's love! Oh, my husband, for your own sake, for that of Hélène, do not take this fatal step! The inevitable hour must come when all will be made known and——"

The twilight shadows could not hide the heavy frown which furrowed the marquis's brow.

"Never," he replied. "It shall never become known! And mark me well, Cécile. I do not love that priest who is your spiritual director. Take care that no word passes your lips to him in the secret conference of the confessional. Between those whom Heaven has united no earthly being should arrogate the power to thrust himself. If any—the slightest—breath which could sully the brightness of my ancestral shield should leave your lips for the ear of that sleek priest I will enact a penalty too terrible to be named."

"I will obey you, as I have ever done," said the marquise, in a broken voice, turning her tear-bathed face upwards, "even though thereby I forfeit my hope of heaven. But—oh, Edouard"—and she sank upon her knees beside her husband's chair and seized his hand with a frantic grasp—"have pity upon me and upon her! She is innocent! The crime was mine!—was yours! Tell Hélène all; she may be generous and——" Sobs stopped her utterance.

Ere the marquis could reply a faint rustle sounded from the shadows of the spacious room.

Both turned hastily towards that direction and saw they were no longer alone.

The intruder was a lady in her first youth, tall and queenlike in bearing, with a dark, beautiful face, marked by the proud cast which distinguished the features of the Marquis D'Aubrion, though softened into feminine regularity.

It was easy to see that the marquis and she were father and daughter.

"Hélène!" exclaimed the marquis, with some asperity. "how long have you been in this room?"

"I have but this moment entered, my father."

"You have heard nothing of the conversation between your mother and myself?"

"I only heard my name."

"Enough. I have something of importance to communicate. Be seated, my child. Madame la marquise, resume your seat."

With a despairing gesture the marquise obeyed.

"Hélène, the years pass swiftly, and I have lately felt their added weight tell heavily upon me. It were well now that I rendered up the charge of your future to one who should love you well and on whose noble heart and strong support you can rely when I sleep with the ancestors of our house. I have chosen such a man—one worthy to be my son and your husband."

"My father, I have no wish save your own—but I do not desire to marry."

"I have waited until the anniversary of your birthday had passed, Hélène," resumed the marquis, "before I communicated this intelligence to you, in order that thus I should fulfil to the very letter a promise made long years since. You will be a happy woman, my daughter, in the union to which I have long looked forward, for your future husband is young, noble, accomplished, a brave soldier, one of the old noblesse, and——"

The marquis paused.

His daughter looked at him inquiringly.

"And an Englishman."

"An Englishman!" repeated Hélène, in a tone of incredulous surprise.

"Yes, an Englishman, mademoiselle," said the marquis, sternly. "And why not?"

"I do not love the island race who have been the enemies of La Belle France for centuries," replied Hélène, with a touch of defiance in her tones. "And Georges, who has lived long amongst them, says little for their home life—he says they are cold and cruel."

"Georges knows nothing of Englishmen; something of English horses he may understand, for his knowledge of the language seems confined to such words as 'le sport' and 'jockey,' while his acquaintances have been selected from maquignons, escrocs and polissons. Bah! He has neither brains nor heart to comprehend anything beyond the points of a racehorse or the merits of a danseuse. But listen, my daughter, and you shall learn why I have affianced you thus to a man of another race and why you have known nothing of it until to-day.

"You have heard me speak often of that terrible battle where the star of the Emperor sank to rise no more. It was on that red field that I first met the English. I had heard much of them from men who had been with King Joseph in the Peninsula, but I did not need this testimony to convince me that the island race furnished good soldiers.

"In the stirring pages of Froissart I found the English depicted as we find them still—brave to that dogged obstinacy which never confesses defeat. The old Flemish canon has told in word-pictures which will never die how dire was the English arrow-flight, how heavy the English sword-stroke in the olden chivalric days; and I could realise that the men who struggled up the slippery banks, sword-blade studded, under a storm of grape and musket-balls at Badajos were fit descendants of those who fought at Agincourt and Creçy.

"As we sat through the long, gloomy night preceding the battle, and watched the bivouac fires of the 'leopards,' I felt that the struggle of the morrow would be one upon which the Emperor's all would be staked.

"I have often described—you have frequently read of—the varying fortunes, the stirring vicissitudes of that fatal day. Men talked of treachery, of anything and everything which could hide from themselves the fact that we suffered a disastrous defeat, because we had encountered those who were as brave and more obstinate than ourselves. I laid no such solace on my soul. A brave heart needs it not.

"My regiment—I was but a captain then—came late into action. Our splendid cavalry charges, so often repeated, seemed to have effected nothing against those thin red lines which formed the English squares. Our artillery tore wide gaps—the stern, stolid men closed up like automata: the line was a little short, the square a trifle small, but firm as a rock. Our horsemen rode around those bristling bayonets and spurred their steeds with mad valour upon the shining or ensanguined steel. But in vain.

"Let us see what infantry can do, we thought. The order came. Our corps moved forward with enthusiasm. Yes, ours be the task to sweep away these redcoats in wild, panic-stricken flight.

"We had scarcely reached the edge of the plateau when we came upon some disordered remnants of a Nassau regiment which had been well nigh annihilated by a troop of Cuirassiers, who were still in full pursuit. A young English officer of commanding presence and much masculine beauty was endeavouring by word to rally the flying men. He had partially succeeded, and the Nassauers were just forming to resist cavalry as we came upon them.

"My men—grim vieux moustaches—did not fire, they trusted alone to the cold steel; and their bayonets, with the aid of the sabres of the pursuing cavalry, soon made an account of the Dutchmen.

"At our assault I had sprung forward and engaged the Briton. I could see with the soldier's instinct that here was a foe who, in the language of the English poet, was 'worthy of my steel.'

"Nothing loth, the redcoat faced me. He was a marvellous swordsman. I had held myself to be unsurpassed with the sabre or the small-sword, but here was a man at least my equal. He stood alone, for the last Hessian had yielded up his dying breath—he stood environed by bayonets and sabres thirsting for his blood—but he never flinched nor faltered—he never removed his proud blue eyes from their steady gaze into mine; he retired no step for aught that I could do, though I brought into play every artifice of feint and blow known to swordsmen.

"I felt, without seeing, the wolfish glare which sat in the eyes of the men around. I knew, without daring to glance at them, that fifty bayonets were ready to pierce the intrepid Englishman, that fifty sabres thirsted to drink his blood. I shouted, in a delirious battle-agony:

"'No, no! Let him alone! He is mine—mine,' and in an access of emotion I made an unguarded attack which my opponent retaliated by inflicting a slight wound.

"As my blood spirted forth the angry passions of the Voltigeurs became ungovernable, and, despite my maddened entreaties, two bayonets pierced the Englishman in thigh and sword-arm. He fell. I rushed forward and bestrode his body. I hurled angry imprecations at my men, who had baulked me of so noble a quarry. I tore a sash from one of the dead Hessians lying by and bound up his wounds, and was about to pour some brandy between the white lips of the insensible man when a terrible shout aroused me.

"I rose hastily. A thunder of advancing hoofs shook the ground. The hoarse battle shouts of many voices filled the air. The English cavalry were upon us! We had not time to form before they charged us. Ma foi! I knew those terrible cavaliers well by repute—they were the famous Ecossais Gris, the Scots Greys, so named from the colour of their chargers. Well do I remember that moment: the heavy grey horses—the red-coated riders with their shaven faces, which were yet set more terribly stern than moustached Hun or bearded Cossack. Well do I recall the

sweep of the long, sharp sabres hewing away with such relentless energy.

"I did all that man could possibly do, but there was neither chance of resistance nor hope of escape. I saw my old comrades smitten down on the right hand and on the left till at last in a vain effort at a rally the sabre of a gigantic trooper shattered my feebler steel and a heavy stroke mercifully rendered me unconscious of the further slaughter of my men.

"How long I lay unconscious I do not know, but when I again unclosed my heavy eyes the evening shadows were in the sky. I felt strangely weak and indifferent to all around, but found that my aching head was resting against a man's knee, that some cool, refreshing moisture was being applied to my forehead, and that earnest voices sounded in my ears. As consciousness further returned I caught an English ejaculation from the lips of the man supporting me, followed by a volley of German gutturals from a group of soldiers who surrounded us.

"I gazed at them dreamily—I knew the flat faces, the high cheek bones, for we had met before: they were the Prussians!

"I did not know sufficient of their language to understand the colloquy, but that they wished to kill me the bayonets which they frequently advanced till their sharp tips touched my breast proved conclusively.

"The man who supported me spoke to them in German with earnest remonstrances. Then one wolfish face bent down over me and pointed to my watch-chain, which was partially visible. If not life he would at least have plunder. The man supporting me laid my head down gently on the breast of a dead Voltigeur, unbuttoned feebly with one hand his scarlet coat and drew from the fob of his pantaloons a massive and handsome gold watch which he passed to the Prussian.

"I saw the meaning. The Englishman had saved my life—had ransomed even my property with his own. I strove to tender my watch—to remonstrate—but found my tongue and hand refused their office. I had just sufficient strength to glance up at the face of the Englishman and identify him as my late opponent, and then I relapsed into obliviousness of all things.

"When I again became sensible I was in hospital at Brussels, and the English officer occupied the next bed. We were in process of time both healed of our wounds. The meeting on the field of war developed into a fast friendship. This man was formed to appreciate me and I him. The same glorious pride of ancestry—the same soldier's love of all that is noble and chivalrous inspired us. We were both noble: the Englishman descended even from an old Norman race whose posterity yet occupy one of our oldest châteaux. What else was possible but that we should form a friendship like that of the two great Hebrew warriors of which it was said truly that 'it passed the love of women'?

"I went to England with Lord Mostyn and spent a long time at his father's house, for I did not care to return to Paris while her pavements were profaned by the tread of brutal Cossack or greedy German.

"It was then in the ardent friendship which existed between us that we made the solemn, irrevocable engagement that our eldest children of different sexes should become united. Providence has sanctioned the compact, for the Earl of Thanet has a son only, while one daughter is the sole prop of the ancient line of D'Aubrion."

A convulsive sob from the marquise echoed wailingly through the darkened rooms.

"Cécile!" exclaimed the marquis, meaningly, "you are unwell. Retire to your chamber. You also, ma fille, can go and dream of your newly-found happiness. I have seen your betrothed, who will be here-to morrow. He is a noble and kingly man. He has stood shoulder to shoulder with your compatriots in the Crimea when they repulsed the Cossack dogs and thereby won that dull yet glorious insignia worthy to rank even with our immortal chevisance, the bronze Cross of Victoria. Ah, my daughter, you will be indeed a happy woman."

The marquis rose and held the door with old-world courtesy while his wife and daughter left the room, one to repair to her boudoir to muse on the startling change impending in her life, and the marquise to visit her private oratory and there, before the figure of the Virgin Mother pour out entreaties in broken words which the world must never hear.

CHAPTER I.

"The London season's ended in July—
Sometimes a little later. I don't err
In this, whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders." BYRON.

It was the close of an exceptionally brilliant London season. Unlike these later days, the serenity of the social and political atmosphere was undisturbed—"the purple testament of bleeding war" had not been ope'd by the hypocritical hand of the modern Crusader—Ambition's fiat had not gone forth to exchange the hatred engendered by race and religion and coveted land for the deadly strife of extermination and reprisal—no unspeakable horrors rose to heaven for vengeance on their prepetrators: all was calm and placid. The prosperity which flows from Peace's cornucopia, the absence of political contests, the abundant presence of our own Royalty and the expected advent of much Royalty from other lands, combined to render the season one to be long remembered by the votaries of fashion.

The old Latin poet was right when he reminded us that at the bottom of even the jewelled cup of sweetest hydromel there is a drop of intensest bitterness. Youth may be at the prow and Pleasure at the helm, and our craft may be as taut of rig and as luxurious of appointment as that of the swart Cleopatra as she passed triumphant over the lily-sprinkled, calm Egyptian steam; but behind the helmsman, on the guiding rudder, sits perchance black Care, the killjoy, or a form even more malign, that of white Death, the skeleton.

Pleasures had palled on the "world," which term may be understood to mean the few thousand units who dwell in ancestral homes or Belgravian mansions, who own broad acres of English soil, who ride blooded horses and drink rare wines and generally comport themselves as it is meet for an extremely Upper Ten to do. Very weary were their jeunesse dorée—the more so perhaps as the perpetual flight of old Time's heavy pinions is apt to rub off much of the gold leaf in which the world delights and leave beneath too evident the dull lead or the sordid clay.

Aweary then were the sage, or simple, legislators who from the ornate pile which rises beside the "silent highway" of the Thames exercise imperial sway over a realm which dwarfs into nothingness the broad dominions of an Alexander or a Cæsar. Aweary then were the younger scions of Upper Tendom and longed ardently for the lessening days when over the elastic heather or through the stiff stubble they should seek the speckled quarry. Aweary were the Belgravian mammas, tired of the chaperonage of nubile daughters; and very much aweary, too, were those young ladies themselves, for the fascinations of unlimited valses with eligible parties had palled, the last production of the spasmodic or salacious poet of the season had been discussed, the newest pictures and the most recent attraction in the shape of opera star had been duly lauded and now life was barren and wearisome beyond belief.

Nevertheless the Row in Hyde Park was thronged on this sultry July day, and the scene displayed was more than usually animated.

No capital save London can show such a concourse of rank, beauty, fame and wealth—nowhere else can be seen such women, such men, such horses.

Our great poet has held it to be a thing admirable to "witch the world with noble horsemanship," and, truly, few Englishmen will differ from him—most certainly none of those would have dissented who were leaning over the rails to view and comment on the equestrians and their steeds, for whom amongst the spectators, from the sunburnt country drover to the pale youth escaped for awhile from counter and till-wand, admiration was the rule.

This was most noticeable in a young man of perhaps twenty-five years of age, who was leaning carelessly upon the barrier and eyeing the steeds of the fair Amazons and their cavaliers with an appreciative gaze. His tightly clasped hands, indurated and stained with toil, showed that he was an artizan, and the blue-striped shirt and curiously wrought steel watchguard of an exquisitely delicate pattern indicated that he was probably a follower of the art of St. Clement.

At sight of each specially well-bred animal a bright flash kindled in the young workman's quiet grey eye and a smile of enthusiasm curved his resolute mouth. The absorbed interest he evinced was explained when his answer to a casual remark made by a bystander was couched in the rich Doric of the north of England, and stamped him as a Yorkshireman—one of the race who, had they lived in classic times, would have set up a Centaur as their idol, for no Arab of the desert sands, no Tartar of the Kirghez Steppes ever loved a "prime bit of horseflesh" better than do the men of the Ridings.

So engrossed was the young man with the many specimens of equine perfection before him that he seemed to have no eyes for their riders. The hero of a hundred fights, the sage legislator, the peer of historic name, passed alike unnoticed, although he heard on the right hand and on the left names which would adorn Fame's beadroll worthily.

As a lady and gentleman presently cantered towards the spot, however, the chorus of comment indulged in alike by gentle and simple who stood around attracted the apathetic Yorkshireman's attention despite himself.

"Ah! here she comes!"

"Splendid girl!"

"By jove! ain't she a stunner, old pal?"

"Oh, Ciel! Une belle la plus charmante! Elle est même une déesse!"

"Yes; Lady Adeline——"

The young man did not catch the name, but he gazed earnestly at the approaching lady and realised that all words of praise when applied to her matchless beauty were as idle air. For never since the cold earth closed over or the hot flames licked with fierce love that glorious "face that launched a thousand ships and burned the topless towers of Ilium"—the features of the Grecian Helen—never since then had the world seen a woman so marvellously fair as the Lady Adeline De Vavassour.

The lady's face was faultlessly perfect. Not the most famous products of the magic chisels of Phidias or Praxiteles could rival features characterised by such classic regularity.

Complexion of pellucid fairness, rose hued now on each finely moulded cheek, small sweet mouth, large eyes of the "soft grey of the modest dove," and wealth of fawn-tinted hair whose plaits, rolled into a cluster behind, set off the exquisite poise of the small head and proud, lithe neck.

The girl's black habit displayed to great advantage a form with whose willowy, girlish grace the added charm of womanhood's fuller symmetry softly blended.

She sat her beautiful chestnut mare as only an English lady can—with that mingling of dégagée nonchalance and proud restraint which is so fascinating.

The gentleman who rode by the lady's side formed an undeniable foil to her remarkable loveliness. Although in the prime of early manhood, nature had been very unkind to him in the matter of personal graces. His pale, hard face was bloated and beardless; the thick, coarse, sensual lips were unconcealed by the friendly shelter of a moustache, and the low forehead was crossed and recrossed by furrows as deep and far less soft than those which the inexorable ploughshare of old Time creates. It needed but the sly, shifting eye, whose colour varied chameleon-like, and whose look rarely met you with a full, open glance, to complete a physiognomy on which Nature herself had stamped a Cain-like brand, bidding all men beware!

"So, Mr. Kesterton," the lady was saying, in a sweet voice whose soft tones seemed the fit complement of her loveliness, "I hear that your cousin has returned."

"I believe so" was the somewhat curt reply of the young man.

"Have you not met him yet?" asked Lady Adeline.

Just a shade of surprise might have been perceptible in her tone.

"I have not."

An older woman or one better acquainted with the world would surely have detected that this subject was distasteful to Mr. Kesterton. Lady Adeline, however, noticed it not. A strange, wistful look came into the soft eyes as of one whose thoughts are far from one's surroundings.

"One would have thought that you would have been the first to greet him upon his return, for all connected with Hugh Mostyn is so romantic. They say he is very noble and chivalrous, and as brave as a crusader of old. Did he not win the plain bronze cross which is an Englishman's crowning glory on that dull November day when the Muscovite hurled his grey hosts on our thin, weakened line?"

Mr. Kesterton's pallid face grew stern. He did not reply in words, but nodded assent brusquely.

"Your cousin is a hero," continued Lady Vavassour, with increased enthusiasm. "He recalls to my mind those grand old knights who will live for ever in the records of the historian or the lay of the poet. And I hear that he is kindness itself to the poor and helpless, and is labouring already in the dingiest London alleys to bring fresh life and hope to the sad and the stricken. He leaves his country's army at a parent's request, but he joins instead that great host of well-doers who fight under the ensign of Heaven."

The lovely face of the lady lighted up with fresh ardour as she concluded. It seemed indeed that this girl, more visionary than even Pygmalion, had conceived love for a name—a fame.

"Yes, Hugh will do as his father commands."

Mr. Kesterton scarcely took pains to conceal the palpable sneer which accompanied his speech.

"The French lady who is to be your cousin's wife must be a happy woman," Lady Adeline continued. "What a charm must have hovered about the romance of their strange betrothal. How thrilling the report of fame, bearing testimony to the nobleness of her future husband, his daring bravery, his goodness—how rapturous at last to meet him face to face and behold—if rumour wrong him not—a king of men."

No reply was vouchsafed to this outburst by the companion of the fair enthusiast.

"I have a childish desire to see Captain Mostyn," resumed the girl. "One ever wishes to know whether the real corresponds with one's ideal."

"Your wish will soon be gratified, Lady Adeline, for here comes Hugh Mostyn."

(To be Continued.)

Of forty-three varieties of apples tested by M. A. Truelle, of the Chemical Society of Paris, the red American renette was found to contain the largest amount of sugar.

Richard Daft, the famous Notts player, has become the recipient of a legacy betokening the high character he has won for himself in the cricket-field. By his will the late Mr. John Johnson, hon. sec. of the Notts County Cricket Committee, has left him a sum of £500, together with the whole of his pictures, worth at least £2,000. Mr. Johnson also left Daft's eldest son £5,000.

Exhibition.—An interesting loan collection of fans is open to public exhibition at the rooms of the Liverpool Art Club. There are nearly 200 specimens exhibited, including French, Italian, Dutch, Chinese, and Japanese fans, of very curious design and workmanship. The French fans have a special interest apart from their value as works of art, many of them belonging to the Revolution period, and being ornamented with characteristic subjects.

THE SEASIDE FOR INVALIDS.

The question as to whether seaside resorts are really beneficial to invalids has always been open to question, but the "Lancet" this week has openly showed her colours and ridicules the idea. Bad drainage and cooking, impure water, the incessant worry of crowds, the execrable musicians, and the changeful nature of the climate, are several items in a very large list of injurious influences. Invalids, the paper affirms, fare much better in country districts than upon the coasts; and after reading their leader upon the subject, we must conclude that, however beneficial the sea-air may be for persons of robust health, its influence has a contrary effect upon those whose constitutions have been previously enfeebled.

HAPPINESS.

A SONNET.

Oh, happiness! How many dream of thee,
When lock'd in ling'ring arms of weary woe;
When want, too, trembles 'neath the dear roof tree,
Oh, happiness! where may thy suppliants go?
In the sweet spring of life when all looks fair,
When ardent youth is flushed with hope and health,
When summer glows with a sun-golden glare,
And balmy breezes blow as if by stealth,
Then could I clip thy wings to keep thee here,
To share the bounteous autumn's golden ears.
And 'ere the winter's chill had form'd a bier,
Fond hope should come to dry up all our tears.
Oh, now, indeed, like sunshine after rain,
True happiness alone is rest from pain.

I. N. C.

SCIENCE.

Black Walnut Satin.—Asphaltum thinned with turpentine will stain a beautiful black walnut colour. It must be varnished over.

Aniline Bronzing Fluid.—Take ten parts of aniline red and five of aniline purple, and dissolve in 100 parts of alcohol at 95°, taking care to help the solution by placing the vessel in a sand or water bath. As soon as the solution is effected, five parts of benzoic acid are added, and the whole is boiled from five to ten minutes, until the greenish colour of the mixture is transformed in a fine, light-coloured bronze. The bronze is stated to be very brilliant, and to be applicable to all metals, as well as to other substances. It is easily laid on with a brush, and dries promptly.

Cement for Petroleum Lamps.—A cement particularly adapted for attaching the brass works to petroleum lamps is made by boiling three parts resin with one part of caustic soda and five of water. The composition is then mixed with half its weight of plaster of Paris. It sets firmly in half to three-quarters of an hour. It is said to be of great adhesive power, not permeable to petroleum, a low conductor of heat, and but superficially attacked by hot water. Zinc white, white lead, or precipitated chalk may be substituted for plaster, but hardens more slowly.

Effect of Cheap Japans as Dryers.—Cheap japans, used as dryers, are in part responsible for a large class of paint troubles, which are described under the head of "chipping," "cracking," and "becoming fatty." Too many painters are led away by cheap japan (on account of its good drying qualities), that has but little binding and less elastic hardening properties; and colour ground in it with a little oil (which it has no desire to mix with) is liable to curdle as soon as you put them together, and gets gritty or fatty. Thin it down with turpentine, and let it stand over night, and it will look like liver in the cup; and as the turpentine leaves it, it gets spongy.

A New Kind of Sugar in Walnut Leaves.—Tanret and Villiers have discovered in the leaves of the walnut tree a new sort of sugar nearly allied to the inosite. They have given it the name of nucite. Its chemical composition may be expressed in the new system by the following formula, $C_6H_{12}O_8 . 2H_2O$. It has a sweet taste, crystallizes in inclined orthorhombic prisms, has a specific of 1·54, is easily soluble in water, alcohol, ether and chloroform. It does not turn the plane of polarised light nor reduce Fehling's copper solution. It is not fermentable, even after boiling with diluted sulphuric acid. When treated with nitric acid, it does not form either oxalic or mucic acid.

Improved Carmine Ink for Draughtsmen.—The solubility of carmine lake in caustic aqua ammonia is attended with this disadvantage; that in consequence of the alkaline properties of ammonia, the cochineal pigment will in time form a basic compound, which, in contact with a steel pen, no longer produces the intense red but rather a blackish colour. To avoid this evil, the Polytech. Notizblatt recommends to prepare the ink as follows: Triturate 1 gramme of pure carmine with 15 grammes of acetate of ammonia solution, and an equal quantity of distilled water, in a porcelain mortar, and allow the whole to stand for some time. In this way a portion of the alumina which is combined with the carmine dye is taken up by the acetic acid of the ammonia salt and separates as precipitate, while the pure pigment of the cochine remains dissolved in the half saturated ammonia. It is now filtered and a few drops of pure white sugar syrup added to thicken it. In this way an excellent red drawing ink is obtained, which holds its colour a long time. A solution of gum arabic cannot be employed to thicken this ink, as it still contains some acetic acid, which would coagulate the bassorine which is one of the natural constituents of gum arabic.

A New Fluorescent Dyestuff.—A Zurich chemist has obtained a new fluorescent dye by acting upon resorcin with oxalic and sulphuric acids. It dissolves readily in alkali, and dyes silk, as well as mordanted wool, red. It resembles eosin in chemical properties. Treated with an excess of fuming sulphuric acid, it dissolves with an orange yellow colour, which gradually turns to green blue, green, and finally a beautiful blue. When heated to 212 deg. Fah. it changes to a purple red. When super-saturated with dilute caustic soda, the solution turns a beautiful carmine red, and exhibits magnificent fluorescence.

A Remarkable Railway Bridge.—The new iron railway bridge over the river Douro, near Porto, Portugal, crosses it with an arch of single span which measures 160 metres (520 feet) and has a rise of 42 metres (138 feet 6 inches). It is crescent-shaped in form; that is, the extrados and the intrados, which are connected by struts in the form of St. Andrew's cross, are farthest apart at the crown.

American Horseshoes.—A California paper describes "the latest thing out" as a new horseshoe made out of three thicknesses of raw hide compressed together by heavy pressure. It is said to last longer, weighs only one-fourth as much as the common shoes, never split the hoof, and has no bad influence on the foot. It is so elastic that the horse's step is never uncertain. This will remind the farmers who drove cattle and horses across the plains in early days of the fact, now almost forgotten, that this is no invention, for the cattle, and horses too, were often shod with shoes made out of buffalo-hide, cut from the neck, where the skin is almost an inch thick.



[THE DEATH CHAMBER.]

WHO DID IT?

OR,

THE WARD'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XV.

Has sorrow thy young days faded,
As clouds o'er the morning bier?
So fast have those young days faded
That even in sorrow were sweet.
Does Time with his scythe wither
Each feeling that once was dear?
Then, child of misfortune, come hither,
I'll weep with thee tear for tear.

"I AM to understand then that the body of this unfortunate young gentleman has remained here undisturbed since it was found on the sea shore?" said the inspector of the district, as he accepted the key offered to him by Mr. Leclerc and prepared to break the seal and enter the apartment where the corpse lay.

"Precisely so. I can give you evidence of the fact should you desire it," returned the owner of The Wilderness, blandly.

"Not at all, not at all," said the detective, deprecatingly. "You cannot suppose that I could doubt your word, Mr. Leclerc, only it is our duty not to take anything for granted, but to be able to make oath that such and such conditions were observed. It is no disrespect on our part, as you may well comprehend, sir."

"Certainly, certainly, you must do your duty. Now, shall we proceed into the apartment?" replied Mr. Leclerc, with an assenting nod.

The detective, Mr. Drew, complied, and led the way into the death chamber.

The large coverlet still concealed the face and figure, and Mr. Drew, without further delay, lifted the cloth.

"Yes," he said, "yes, it's plain enough. The death has been inflicted by violence, and that from the front, and after a struggle, otherwise it would be in the back, and the whole aspect different. Mark me, Mr. Leclerc, there is trouble in the expression—a frown on the brow that would have been wanting in the other supposition. Mostly there is a remarkable placidity in those who have died of gunshot wounds, as you are probably aware."

"Luckily, I have not much experience in such calamities," rejoined the gentleman; "but now will you examine further? It may save trouble when the coroner arrives."

Mr. Drew assented, and proceeded in his work. He quickly and professionally took a survey of all the belongings of the murdered man. He unfastened the blood-stained dress, and searched eagerly for the wound.

There was the clear evidence of a bullet, and the detective went on to examine the folds of the dress to see if any other such deadly missile had lodged there.

It was soon discovered.

The inner vest had a bullet in its wrappings, and on it was the stamp of initials that could not be mistaken.

"N. G." was graven in small but clear marks on the lead.

Mr. Drew looked eagerly on it, like a cat which had just discovered the haunt of a mouse, or a bloodhound discerning the trail of a fox.

"This is valuable, Mr. Leclerc; worth gold, as one may say," he observed. "It will go far with any jury in the world to establish the identity of the criminal. Do you happen to know anyone who will answer to the initials here engraved?" he asked, significantly.

Mr. Leclerc gave a knowing, but deprecating smile.

"Excuse me, Mr. Drew, but it seems to me that you can scarcely expect me to reply at once to such a question. It may be that I shall be induced, nay, perhaps forced to do so, but still it would be more agreeable and considerate also to do it under pressure; you understand?"

The detective nodded, though there was a sort of disappointed reticence in his manner as he rejoined:

"It will not be difficult, I imagine, to discover the owner of this bullet. The very county directory will suffice to give the information, and then you will be rather under the shade of a cloud for not being forward in aiding the ends of justice. Still I do justice—ample justice to your motives, Mr. Leclerc, and I suppose you will not think it at all improper to assist me in searching the scene of this terrible crime."

There was a certain significance in the tone that Mr. Leclerc could scarcely fail to notice, and it needed all his self-control to prevent a flush rising to his cheeks.

"Certainly not," he said. "It will of course be a great satisfaction to me for the mystery to be cleared up, especially as the crime was committed while the unfortunate young man was my guest. I have already taken measures to inform his friends of his sad fate."

Drew inclined his head.

"Then you will accompany me, perhaps, Mr. Leclerc," he said. "I should like to know the exact spot where the body was found, though of course the tide will have washed away the first evidence that might have been collected."

"I will call the men who first discovered the body. They shall accompany us, when you have completed your examination of the corpse itself," returned Mr. Leclerc.

And there was not one tinge in his tone or manner that could awaken suspicion in the most distrustful mind, as to his willingness to enter into the investigation.

Drew resumed the survey.

There was not much more to see. The clothes had been saturated with the sea water, and the bloodstains dimmed, if not washed out by the damp.

And then there was a broken link of a chain that had apparently caught in the struggle, and which might have either been his own or belonging to the murderer. The watch was in the pocket, and had stopped probably for lack of winding at midnight.

Drew noted all these details carefully in his pocket-book, seized on the gold links that were entangled, and secured them in the same recep-

tacle, and then once more locking the door the two actors in the melancholy duty left the room.

Another half hour and then, accompanied by the men who had brought up the corpse, Mr. Leclerc and Drew repaired to the beach.

"You tell me that the body was found here?" asked the detective, sharply, pointing to a spot in the sands not far from a cave of some extent.

"Yes, that's the place. I noticed it particularly," replied Turner. I was quite by chance near the place, when I heard a cry, and found one of the boatmen standing over the body, so of course I took notice of what I saw, so it could be inquired into afterwards."

Drew nodded, but did not reply. He walked slowly from the spot, his eyes fixed on the ground like a bloodhound on the scent, but made no remark.

Twice—thrice he promenaded, as it were, the space, in this silent manner. Then he suddenly stopped.

"There is some valuable evidence to be gathered here at any rate," he observed. "The body has been conveyed from this spot by some agency. It was here that the murder was committed."

The others hastily joined him.

Drew stood pointing to a round space that had evidently been saturated by blood, so that even the tidal wave had not washed it away.

The crimson stream appeared to have sunk so deep that no more flowing water was able to cleanse the stiffened gore.

Drew kneeled down as close as possible to the stained spot, and his sharp eyes examined every inch of the ground.

A flash of triumph illumined his features at last. He stirred the shingle with his finger, and drew from it a ruby and diamond stud, which appeared to belong rather to the sleeve than the front of the shirt.

"This has been torn, it seems, from the very links I have in my possession," he said to Mr. Leclerc. "Do you happen to recognise it? Has Mr. Waldegrave ever worn it in your remembrance?"

Paul Leclerc shook his head.

"No," he said, "I can't recollect it, but then I am not in the habit of observing such trifles. My daughter or Miss Devaux would be far more likely to know whether it was his, and you will not find it difficult to ascertain the owner, I should imagine."

Drew gave his usual silent assent, and then he continued his examination. He measured the distance from the spot where the blood stains had sunk to that where the body was found, and back again from the descent to the bay.

And it was not for some half hour or more that he declared there was no further examination possible, and that they might return to the house.

"I presume that the coroner will be here by the evening, or to-morrow morning, Mr. Leclerc. I suppose you will wait for directions from the gentleman's friends, before you make arrangements for the funeral."

"Certainly—except the first ordinary preliminaries," returned the gentleman. "So soon as they have seen it I should consider it incumbent to put the body in a coffin. Then the rest of the ceremony must be left for the direction of more intimate relatives."

The path was retraced to The Wilderness and at its gates Mr. Drew took his leave for the present.

"It will be necessary to make inquiries in the neighbourhood, Mr. Leclerc. Such as you are naturally reluctant to satisfy; but in the meantime it might be as well for you to ask one of the young ladies as to the jewels worn by Mr. Waldegrave on the evening of his murder, and what ornaments belonged to his dress in the usual way."

Paul Leclerc assented, but he went to his own room for a few minutes ere he carried out the detective's behest.

There was scarcely the eagerness that might have been expected to investigate the mystery that cast so dark a shadow over his house.

"My poor Pauline—my heart's darling, I would have saved you from this torture if I could," he muttered, as he walked to her apartment, "but it is the only chance—the only chance. I dare not leave it untried."

It was a piteous spectacle, indeed, that met his eyes on entering the chamber.

His daughter was up, but only partly dressed. A large peignoir wrapped her slight form, and her beautiful hair was folded round her head, as if the fatigue of dressing it was more than she could bear.

There were circles round her eyes that spoke of the torrents of tears she had shed, but the source seemed to be dried now and a sharp, wild look had replaced the refreshing and relieving moisture.

Her quick glance was turned on her father as he entered and her lips moved, but at first without audible sound.

Mr. Leclerc walked to the couch where she had been laid, and buried his head in the cushions, as if to hide from his sight that woebegone face, hitherto so bright and fresh in its youthful beauty, and a groan rather than words escaped him.

"My child, my child, do not kill me by your grief."

And she—poor girl—gazed at him in a species of stupor, unable to reply to the loving, plaintive prayer.

She drew away the fingers that were concealing his brow with a grave, childlike smile.

"I kill you, my father, no—no—no! It would be very wicked, worse than the murder of Reginald, would it not? He was cursed; yes, my curse is on him, but not as if it were a daughter that did it. I could not murder my father, you know."

Paul Leclerc shuddered at the half senseless yet significant expression of the face he loved so well.

"You do not understand, my darling. What I meant was that I could not bear your sorrow. I could not have courage to see your pale face and tearful eyes. I should die rather than endure such agony. That is what I meant, my darling—my worshipped one," he added, fondly.

Pauline seemed to meditate with earnest perplexity on the words.

Her brain had evidently received a shock that could not be easily righted.

The whole delicate machinery was out of order, and whether it could be set right was a problem that remained yet to be solved.

"You are very anxious, are you not, for the discovery of the criminal?" he returned, tenderly.

"I would give years of my life to find him, to see him punished, to watch his agonies—to tell him of my hatred—my contempt, to pour on him the bitterness of my curse," she said, impetuously.

A thrill ran through the father's frame, but he repressed it by a strong effort.

"Then, my child will summon courage to help in the work; she will not shrink from pain if it will but accomplish it," he said, coaxingly.

"Yes—yes, I will—I will, only try me," she said, eagerly.

"Then listen, Pauline. I believe, and the police believe, that the real guilty one has been found. There is strong suspicion on him, and one of the proofs will require your assistance to confirm it without doubt. Are you equal to the effort?"

Pauline gazed in his face with a strange questioning.

"What do you mean, I must know—I must understand," that implied a degree of distrust in the truth of the assertion that made Mr. Leclerc's brow involuntarily knitted at the painful evidence of his child's want of belief in his judgment and his truth.

"You shall be humoured, Pauline, though I must confess I should have preferred that my assurance was considered sufficient by my own child. Can you collect your senses, your memory, my daughter, sufficiently to say what belonged to him you loved, and what to a stranger?" he went on, speaking slowly and distinctly, as he might have done to one who had been in a measure deprived of reason.

She passed her hand over her eyes and gave a perplexed glance as if to collect some scattered ideas ere she replied.

"If it is to avenge him—to punish the murderer I could endure anything. I would shed my very life, papa, only try me."

"Enough—enough," said Mr. Leclerc, gravely, and yet hastily interrupting the vehemence of her speech. "I will tell you now as well as I can, and as gently what I want you to do. Command yourself, Pauline, and listen."

The girl opened her large eyes and gazed at him with an air that bespoke at once the suspicion and yet the settled purpose of her heart.

"Go on. Tell me," she said, gently.

"Pauline, will you command yourself? Can you bear to see these trinkets? Can you say whether he did wear them on that last sad evening?"

He drew out of his pocket the little packet so ominous, and yet so valuable in the tale it told.

"See here—be calm. So much depends on your self-control, my child," he went on, as he laid them before her.

She took them in her fingers, the touch was like a galvanic battery through her veins, then she dropped them as if they had burnt her by the touch.

"Know them—yes," she said, "only too well. They are not his, they are that guilty wretch, Neville Grantley's. I have seen him wear them again and again."

Mr. Leclerc apparently started at the reply.

"Neville Grantley," he said. "My darling, how could that be? They seemed to have been torn from poor Waldegrave's wrist in the struggle."

"No—no! They are his—I am certain of it. There is no doubt—none. See, how peculiar the work is, and the colour of the stones and setting. Once I remember his observing my eyes fixed on them, and explaining the reason, ask him to produce his. He cannot—he cannot, it will prove all, and the inference will be obvious," she went on, laughing wildly.

"It will be quite sufficient if he produces the other. Yet surely, if none are found on poor Waldegrave, it must be enough since one is found without the other, so far as I know. Could you swear to this, Pauline?"

"Yes," she said, "yes, I could—I could—I will."

"Brave girl! Aye, the time will come when all this will have softened, if not passed away, and then you will find reward and happiness for all this grief and struggle."

She shook her head.

"Never—never," she said, "but, at least, I will have comfort in revenge. I will never rest till all is brought to light, and I can gloat over the misery of the wretch who has caused me such grief. Viola told me not to curse him, but I did—I will," she added, fiercely.

Her father did not speak. His head was bowed perhaps in remorse.

In any case he did not betray anything of the emotion Viola had displayed.

"Ah, I can understand," she resumed. "It was because she loved him that she was thus moved. But she shall taste the same cup. Yes—yes. That will be but just retribution."

Pauline sank down again on the couch in utter exhaustion after this little episode, and Mr. Leclerc, soothing her with tender love and sympathy, at last summoned her maid, and left her to seek repose.

Another phase in the affair, another act in the drama was over safely and satisfactorily.

Would all tide on as smoothly in the course of the varied circumstances which might ensue?

* * * * *

Twenty-four hours after, and a carriage dashed up to The Wilderness at an impetuous and irregular pace that seemed actually to express the terrible agitation of the inmate of the vehicle.

The hall-bell rang furiously.

The door of the carriage flew open at a touch. Then a man of past middle age, with iron grey hair, a lined face, and a bony form that might have been all different when youth had moulded it more softly, jumped out at a bound. He ascended the steps and entered the hall.

"Where is he—my son? I will see him this instant. It is my right," he went on, fiercely, as he perceived that the astonished servants hesitated to obey his frantic behest.

"But—but," the man said, "I will call Mr. Leclerc. What name shall we say, sir?"

"What name, man? Why, the father of the murdered man. I will not wait for forms and ceremonies. Take me to him, I say."

The servant had by this time given a hint to his comrades, who were on the alert like the inmates of a household where an exciting calamity had taken place, and ere many seconds had passed, or the domestic had actually taken more than one step or two in the direction of the broad oak stairs, the door of a neighbouring apartment opened, and Paul Leclerc advanced to meet his excited visitor.

"I understand I am speaking to Sir Philip Waldegrave?" he said, politely, his calm courtesy contrasting strangely with the phrensied condition of his companion.

"Yes, to the victim's father. Take me to him this instant," said the baronet, sternly.

"You shall, of course; no one would venture to hinder you. But I would suggest some delay that you may compose yourself for the ordeal," said Mr. Leclerc, blandly.

"I am calm. Do you not see it? Can you suppose I could stand and speak when my brain is burning, and my limbs quivering did I not calm myself?" returned Sir Philip, vehemently. "Take me this instant to my boy—my unhappy, injured boy."

The host of The Wilderness only expressed his feelings by a slight shrug that spoke of pity and of a species of contempt, which by no means escaped Turner's watchful eyes.

Mr. Leclerc led the way with firm step and unhesitating rapidity to the death-chamber, which, since the visit and examination of the detective, had been transferred from the billiard room to the spacious apartment that had been assigned to the unhappy man as a guest.

Sir Philip did stagger at the threshold as if his strength failed him, but before Mr. Leclerc could offer his aid the weakness passed, and he went steadily forward.

The cloth was drawn back, the handsome features exposed to view, and then came the piteous, frenzied wail of grief.

"My son—my son, if I could have but died for thee! If I could have suffered thy fate," escaped his lips, as he threw himself on the bed beside the senseless form.

"Sir Philip, be comforted. Do not give way to such useless sorrow," said Mr. Leclerc, in a soothing tone. "It is a terrible sorrow, as I know full well. I who am a father, and of an only child," he went on in soft accents.

But the mourner turned fiercely round.

"You; what can you know of my feelings?" he asked. "I tell you I was left with this infant when he was scarce a year old, and from that day to this I have lived for him and him alone. He was my heir, my strength, my safeguard from storm and trouble, and now he is snatched from me by the crime of a villain, not by the common cause of death. But he shall—he will have retribution. It will fall like hail on his head. I know it, I feel it, I pray for it!" he added, solemnly.

Mr. Leclerc shivered.

"No, no, do not say that. It will need no such prayer. It must already have fallen on his head, if his own conscience is not all blunted by the stunning effect of the crime. And it will crush him to the earth—yes, to the very earth," he went on, pleadingly.

But the father did not reply.

There was, as it seemed, either a resentful suspicion, or else a morose sullenness in his grief that forbade any sympathy from the outer world. And once more he cast himself at the side of the senseless corpse.

"Leave me," he said hoarsely. "At least I can expect that at your hands. No one should interfere between me and my only child."

Paul Leclerc bowed coldly and retired.

He sought his own room, and locking the door behind him, he abandoned himself to grief, at least as bitter, and perhaps more agonising and terrific, as that of the unhappy and bereaved father.

Meanwhile Sir Philip stood by the blood-stained form with tearless eyes and inquiring aspect, which seemed to strive to pierce the mystery that surrounded the terrible crime, to ask of the powerless tongue and rigid features an explanation of the dark deed that had ended his life.

"Oh, if thou couldst but speak, my boy—my blessed one. If thou couldst tell the villain's name, I would have him cruelly tortured such as thou couldst not have suffered — thou shouldst be amply avenged. But I will expend my fortune ere I will let you remain unpunished."

As he uttered the words he heard a voice, in a plaintive tone, murmuring words, and a light step slowly pacing the floor of the spacious room.

He looked round and saw a tall, slight figure in a dressing-gown advancing to the coach. The lovely face was so pallid, so colourless, and the very lips so faded from their rosy hue, that for a moment the baronet started as if a ghost was walking through the death chamber.

But he examined more closely the young and beautiful creature who was now at his side.

"Who are you?" she said, in a soft tone; "but I can guess, you are his father, and you are come to avenge his wrongs."

"And you, fair girl, who are you?" he asked in his turn; "you look sad and tearful as if you have mourned my boy. What do you know of him and his murder?"

"I know not—I know not," she said. "All I would say is that the villain must be found, and I think I know him," she added, with a significant nod, that had scarcely full, unclouded reason in its strange significance.

"Indeed, and how, where, who is he?" asked Sir Philip, eagerly. "Are you Mr. Leclerc's daughter, or——"

"Yes, I am, and I was your son's chosen love," she said, in the same singular, monotonous tone, without either shyness or agitation in its accent. "It is no wrong to say so now he is dead, is it?" she asked, in such a childlike tone that it entirely deprived the question of unmaidenly forwardness.

It was more like the transparent simplicity of a child who dreams not of guile nor concealment in its feelings.

It was a perversion of feeling doubtless in the baronet that he half resented this innocent claim on his deceased son's love, and the right to mourn and weep as well as himself.

Yet the girl looked so wan and so lovely that it would have been impossible to check and repel her confidence.

"This is no place for you," he said. "Miss Leclerc, let me take you hence. It is more than I can bear, and to you, a woman, it must be yet more agonising. Come, sweet girl, come," he said, forgetting for a moment his own agony in the chivalrous sympathy with the sweet, helpless one before him.

"No, no," she said. "I like to be near him and you, because you are his father, and you love him too, but she tried to take him from me, and that is why he was murdered."

Sir Philip started.

"What do you mean? What do you say?" half shrieked the father, eagerly. "Who dared?"

Pauline looked frightened at the effect of what she had said.

"No! no! Don't look like that. It was not her fault; it was his—Neville Grantley's," pleaded the girl, as if awakening to a sense of what she had said. "Don't be angry, please. It was him—only him."

"And who do you mean by Neville Grantley? Who is he?" asked the father, in a milder tone, alive to the necessity of drawing the truth by degrees from the poor stricken one.

"Oh, he is Viola's lover, I think," said the girl, shaking her head gravely, but he never said so, nor she either. Still he was jealous, I am sure, and that made him murder my Reginald, my noble, beautiful Reginald."

And a gush of tears came to relieve her poor fevered brain at the words.

Sir Philip was fairly perplexed how to act next. His own stern grief was crushed back in the desire to learn more.

Pauline's mind was evidently still suffering from the stunning shock she had received.

Even if there was no actual delirium, no affection of the brain that could cause alarm, there was still an absence of that responsibility for her words and actions that, as a man of honour, he ought not to attempt to turn to his own purposes, under ordinary circumstances.

Still it was perhaps excusable under the fearfully aggravated affliction he was suffering that he should take every means to ascertain the truth, and he would probably have pursued the examination, which Pauline had in a manner courted, had not voices been heard at the moment calling out the young girl's name.

"Pauline, dear, where are you?"

"Miss Pauline, Miss Pauline, your papa is asking for you," came now in the silence of the house, nearer and nearer by degrees till the girl looked fearfully round.

"It is Viola; yes, yes, it is Viola. She is calling me," said Pauline, "I must go or they will be angry. And Palmer—yes, she is there, too," she added. "They thought I was asleep, you know, but I was not, and I heard the carriage drive up, and so I came to see if they were going to take him away, my beautiful boy."

Sir Philip had no alternative now but to lead her towards the door, near which the voices were now sounding.

The next moment he stood face to face with Viola Devaux.

There was something in the orphan's face that attracted more powerfully than her lovelier friend, and he was no exception to the rule.

The sweet intellectual expression, which had now acquired a deep sadness in its look, was one that at once challenged confidence and respect for the youthful yet noble-natured creature who had already known such sorrow.

"Dearest Pauline, you quite terrified me. Your father would be so distressed if he saw you here. Please come with me," she said, in her sympathetic, pleading tones.

"You do not know who this is, Viola; this is his father. He is come to find out the murderer, though you would not let me curse him," replied Pauline, eagerly taking the girl's extended hand.

Viola gave a graceful acknowledgment to this half introduction, but she did not attempt to pursue the opening thus offered for any further intercourse.

Her sole object seemed to be to draw Pauline from the painful scene.

"Am I speaking to another daughter of Mr. Leclerc?" asked Sir Philip, inquiringly.

"No, to his ward—only his ward," said Viola, quietly. "My name is Devaux."

She could not account for the sudden frown on the face of the dead Reginald's father.

"This may probably account for what this poor girl has said," he observed, coldly. "I believe you and Mr. Neville Grantley have some more than common regard, and that it will be needful to ask some particulars from you, though not just yet. You are right; you should certainly take away this poor suffering girl without delay."

Viola's delicate cheek deepened with a shade of its usual warmth; but only for a moment. Her lips quivered with the words that rose to her lips of indignant resentment.

But they died away as she remembered the real circumstances and position of the speaker.

Why should he trust? Why should he put faith in the character of one whom he knew not, and over whom a shadow of suspicion hovered?

"I will readily answer any questions you may put to me," she said, calmly; "at least, if they

are not inconsistent with delicacy and honour. Come, Pauline, dearest, for your father's sake come."

The unfortunate girl obeyed mechanically, and the maid now advanced to assist in conducting her to her own apartments from which she had wandered.

(To be Continued.)

THE FORREST HOUSE; OR, EVERARD'S REPENTANCE.

CHAPTER LIII.

When Agnes reached the Forrest House, Persian powder, red pepper, Scotch snuff, cut tobacco, Paris green, hellebore, and even Prussic acid, formed a portion of her luggage.

She found her sister so really ill and weak that for a time she had no thought for carpet-bugs, and had there been an army there they would have revelled in perfect security for all of her interference.

But after a few days, when Josephine seemed better and was sleeping quietly, the desire for research and battle came upon her again, incited by the softness of the velvet carpet in her sister's room, and which she thought furnished such a rich field for the marauders.

As it happened, the bay-window was the point at which she commenced operations, as it was farthest from Josephine's bed. And we will not call it chance, but Providence, which directed her at once to the very spot where the tacks had been removed and where the foreign letter lay hidden so carefully from sight.

"They have been here, too," was Agnes' whispered exclamation as she caught sight of the familiar sign, the carpet loosened from the floor.

But if they had been there there was no mark on them now, and Agnes in her search turned the carpet back farther and farther, until she saw the corner of the letter just protruding in sight.

To draw it out and glance at the name upon it, "J. Everard Forrest," was the work of a moment, and then she wondered how it came there, and if it were some old thing received by Everard years ago, and left lying about as something of no interest to him or anybody.

It looked old and worn, and as if it had been read many times. Surely there could be no harm in her glancing at the contents just to see if it were of any value.

Thus reasoning Agnes opened the letter, saw the signature and the date, and then with lightning rapidity read the whole, and Josephine's secret was hers no longer, for Agnes had it, and the effect on her at first was almost as great as it had been on Josephine.

That a great wrong had been committed she was certain, just as she was certain that the letter was being withheld from its rightful owner. But by whom? That was the question she asked herself during the moment she sat motionless upon the floor unable to move, or scarcely think clearly, in her bewildered state of mind.

She did not quite believe it was Josephine, and if not, then of course it must be Dr. Matthewson, and he, if the letter were true, was capable of anything wicked and bad, and there came over her a great fear of him just as it had crept over Josephine when she first knew his sin.

Agnes must not let him know what she had found, and believing Josephine innocent, she must not disturb her, and add to her nervousness.

Everard, she had heard, was out of town for a little vacation, which he usually took at that season, and Miss Belknap was therefore the only person in whom she could safely confide.

"She will be discreet, and know just what to do," Agnes thought, and hiding the letter in her pocket, she arranged the carpet and curtains very carefully, put the easy-chair in its place, and was at her sewing by the window when Josephine awoke, after a sleep of nearly three hours' duration.

She was feeling much better, she said, and was disposed to be very kind and indulgent toward Agnes, who, she saw, was looking tired and pale.

"Why, Agnes," she said, "you are almost as white as I am. What is the matter? You have been shut up too closely with me. You have not been out since you came, and you are so accustomed to the air and exercise. Suppose you go for a walk. I am sure it will do you good. You have not yet seen Miss Belknap. Suppose you go there if you like. She never comes here now."

Surely Providence was shaping her course, Agnes thought, and thanking her sister, she replied that fresh air would do her good, and adding that she would not be gone long, left the room to prepare for a walk which was to be instrumental of great and startling results.

* * * * *

Beatrice was going to be married, and notwithstanding what Dr Matthewson had said of her faded looks, and Josephine's falsehood of her thirty-five years, she had never been so beautiful and sweetly attractive in her fresh girlhood as she was now at twenty-nine, with the great happiness shining in her face and showing itself in every action.

Poor, plain, sickly, nervous Mollie was forgotten, for her memory lived in her lovely children, Trix and little Bunchie; but Theodore had felt it right to claim at last his early love, who listened to him differently from what she did in the shadow of the woods and on the shores of the pond, and confessed how dear he was to her and how glad she was to be his and the mother of his children, who had spent a great deal of time with her and loved her already almost as well as they had loved the dead woman fading so fast from their minds.

The wedding, which was to be very private, was to take place on the 15th of December, now only a month in the distance, and Beatrice was exceedingly busy with her preparations—so busy that she had not found time to call upon Agnes, as she intended to do when she heard of her arrival at the Forrest House. She had always liked Agnes, and was glad when her maid came to her room saying that she was in the parlour to see her.

"Ask her to come up here," she said, feeling that Agnes would rather see her in the privacy of her chamber where they were not liable to interruption from callers, and in a moment Agnes was with her, seeming so agitated and excited that Beatrice guessed at once that something was wrong, and asked what was the matter.

It was not in Agnes' nature to keep one in suspense, and she answered by putting the letter into Beatrice's hand and saying:

"I found it hidden under the carpet, where I was looking for bugs, and because I dared not show it to him—the doctor, I mean—who I am sure put it there, I brought it to you. Read it quick and then we must act; we must do; but never let him know I had a hand in it; he would kill me, if he did; there's murder in his nature, or he never could have done this."

Agnes was speaking to ears which did not hear what she was saying, for Bee had taken the letter, postmarked at "Wien" and addressed in a handwriting she knew so well, and the very sight of which made her heart throb with pain, as she remembered the dear little girl whom she believed to be dead in the far away foreign town.

But when she glanced at the date a vague terror seized her and held her fast while she read the letter which I now give to the reader:

Haelder-Strauchsen, Austria.

June 10th, 18—.

Dear Everard.—Are you dead? Is everybody dead in England? my brother and all, that I am forgotten—deserted—and left here alone in this dreadful place? Not dreadful because they are unkind to me, for they are not. Only they say that I am mad and treat me as such, and I always have an attendant with me watching what I do, and I cannot get away, though I have tried so many times. Where my brother is I do not know; only that he left me here more than a year ago, to go to Vienna for a day or two, he said, and I have never seen him since or heard from him; and the head of the house, —Baron Van Schoisner, they call him—says that he is undoubtedly dead, murdered for his money, or he would surely come back. I might believe him, perhaps, if he did not insist that I am his niece, Myra Van Schoisner, and not Rosamond Hastings at all. He says she died last April, a year ago, and was buried by the river which I can see from my window, and that her brother, Dr. Matthewson, left soon after and has not come back.

"Oh, Everard, it is all so dreadful, and sometimes my head buzzes so and feels so big that I am afraid I shall go crazy, as they say I am. I have written and written to you and Bee and Lawyer Russell, and even to my brother, hoping he might be living; but no answer has come, and now I do not think my letters ever left this Maison de Santé, as they call the institution, which stands about three miles back from the Danube. Take the boat at Lintz, and get off at ——, and come quick. Oh, come and get me away from here before I die. I wonder I have not died before this, it is so awful to be shut up and called somebody else, and hear only a foreign language, of which at first I could not understand a word, and they tried not to let me learn. Only the baron speaks English, and a woman called Yulah Van Eisner, who came as attendant two months ago, and who has promised to get this letter off for me."

"I spoke brother's name to her—Dr. Matthewson—and she almost foamed at the mouth, and actually spit upon me because I said I was his sister; but I made her know I was good; made her listen to me, and she became my friend, and taught me to speak with her, and will help me get away if she can. She says my brother is not dead; he is a villain, and wants my money; and that Myra Van Schoisner is in the grave where they say I am; and it's all horrible, and I am so sick and frightened, and so afraid I shall be mad if you don't come quick.

"Dear, dear Everard, come to your poor

"Rossie."

This was all Rossie had written, but a postscript had been added, in a cramped, uneducated hand, and broken English, to this effect:

"I open this paper to tell when comes come to Hotel Rother Krebs, in Lintz, where I is work zu hause, and wait for die Englander. Asks for Yulah Van Eisner. I hates him mutch."

To say that Beatrice's nerves were shaken by this letter would be putting in very mild language just how she felt. With her usual quickness of perception, she saw and understood the diabolical plot which had been so long successful, and her first impulse was to rush through the streets of Rothsay, and proclaiming the doctor's perfidy, have him arrested at once.

Her next and soberer thought was to proceed in the matter more quietly and surely, and to this end she questioned Agnes minutely as to just where and how she found the letter, and if she could throw any light upon the way in which it came there.

But Agnes could not; she only knew she had found it, and that she believed Dr. Matthewson himself had by some foul method obtained possession of it and hidden it away for safe keeping, though why he had not destroyed it and so made its discovery impossible, neither she nor Beatrice could guess.

Her sister, she said, was in a very strange, nervous state of mind, but she could not connect her with the crime in any way, for, unscrupulous as she might be, she would not dare make herself amenable to the law by being a party to her husband's guilt.

This was Agnes' view of the matter, and Beatrice coincided with her, but bade her to be

very watchful at the Forrest House and see if any search was made for the missing letter, and by whom.

Beatrice's next interview was with Lawyer Russell, who, in his surprise, bounded from his chair half way across the room, as he cried:

"Lord bless my soul, Rossie alive! Rossie not dead! but hid away in a private madhouse. It's the most hellish plot I ever heard of—ever—and it is prison for him, the villain; but we must move cautiously, Miss Belknap, very cautiously, as we have the very old Nick to deal with in that doctor. I am glad the boy is gone just now, as it would have been like you to have blated it out to him, and then all the world couldn't have stopped him from throttling the wretch in the street and spoiling everything. The letter was written long ago, and there's no knowing what may have happened since to our little girl. She may be dead sure enough now, or, what is worse, mad in real earnest. So don't go to kicking up a row just yet till we get more proof, and then we'll spring the trap so tight that he cannot get away.

"I'm honestly afraid though that he has done something worse with the little girl since he had this letter, which the Lord only knows how he got. He must have a key to Everard's drawer; but we'll fix him, and, Miss Belknap, I say, you or somebody must go and hunt her up, poor little Rossie. I'll be hanged if it don't make me cry to think of her shut up, and waiting and waiting for us to come. Go on your wedding trip. You and the parson will do better than Everard, whose name they have heard and for whom they may be on the watch. Morton is new to them, and will excite no suspicion. This girl—what's her name—Yulah Van Eisner, must be found first, of course, if she is not already put out of the way, and with her help you'll fetch her, poor little girl. You ought to go right away, and we'll say nothing to Everard till you've found her. Suspense and then disappointment would kill him outright. And he must not go; that hound would track him sure and everything be spoiled. You must do it, and you can better than anybody else."

Beatrice felt that she could too, and had rapidly concocted in her mind a denouement both startling and novel, and highly satisfactory. But there was one difficulty to be surmounted. Theodore's people might not be willing for him to be gone so long, and in that case she said:

"I'll postpone the wedding and go alone."

But this was not necessary, for in response to the long letter which went that night there came a telegram, "I can go," and then all Bee's thoughts were turned to the work she had on hand, and she grew so restless and nervous and impatient for the day when she could start that people noted and commented upon her changed looks and manner, wondering greatly what ailed her, and if her heart were not in the marriage, but really given to Everard as some confidently affirmed.

He was in Rothsay now, and with her every evening talking always of Rossie, whose grave he bade her be sure and find, and bring him something from it, if only a blade of grass. Once he startled her by saying he had half made up his mind to join her party, and go with her, so great was his desire to see where Rossie was buried.

But Bee turned upon him so fiercely, declaring that she preferred going alone with Theo, that he abandoned the plan altogether, and felt a little hurt at the vehemence with which his company had been rejected.

He was at the wedding, however, as were a few more of Beatrice's choice friends, all of whom marvelled at the abstraction of the bride, who was so absent-minded and gave such queer answers to their inquiries as to where she was going, and how long she expected to be gone.

But whatever they might have thought of her, the bridegroom, the Rev. Theodore, was perfectly satisfied, and never man wore a happier face on his wedding-day than his as he received the bride he had loved so long, and knew that she was his at last.

It was all so different, this wedding-day from that other one which seemed so very far away, and almost as if it had never been. Then there had been no real happiness, no throbs of joy coursing through his veins; there was only a feeling that he was doing right, and that if he did his duty faithfully he should at least have a quiet kind of content in his future life.

He had done his duty faithfully, and he had been content, if that state of mind can be so called which has always a lingering regret for the "might have been"—a memory of something lost which was sweeter far than the gain, and more to be desired.

The sweet was all his own now; the "might have been" was in the present tense; it was, and he was supremely happy as he bade his friends good-bye, and followed his impatient wife into the ship which, on the 15th December, sailed away for the Continent, where they hoped to find poor Rossie.

Agnes was at the wedding, and, with the exception of Lawyer Russell, was the only one who had the slightest suspicion of the reason which had taken the newly-wedded pair so suddenly away.

But Agnes was safe as the grave, though often at her wits' end to know what to make of her sister, who grew worse instead of better, and who sometimes talked and acted as if she had lost her reason.

She had missed the letter from its hiding-place, and gone nearly wild in her excitement and anxiety as to who had found it.

But as her husband's manner was unchanged, except as he fretted at her continued illness, and said he did not admire nervous wives, she gradually grew more quiet, though there was constantly with her a sense of depression and presentiment of some great evil which was to be brought about by means of the lost letter.

CHAPTER LIV.

Just where the madhouse was situated, how far from Vienna, from Lintz, or how far from the Danube, does not matter to the reader, who needs only to know there was such a place embowered in trees, and flowers, and shrubs, and seeming to the casual passer-by like a second little Eden, where one had nothing to do but to enjoy the brightness of the Austrian skies and the beauty of the sea around.

But every door was barred, and every window had a network of iron in front of it, through which white, haggard faces looked wistfully and strange. Wild laughs, mingled sometimes with cries of rage, were heard to issue at all hours of the day.

Frequently the inmates of that house, or at least those who were on the "good list," walked in the beautiful grounds, which covered several acres, but never walked alone.

An attendant was always with them, watchful, vigilant, without, however, seeming to be so; for the rule of the house was kindness, whenever it would answer, and as much freedom as was compatible with safety.

Except in extreme cases, where the patient was poor and obscure, it was not a cruelly conducted household which Baron or Doctor Van Schoisner had in charge; but in all the world there was not, perhaps, a more avaricious, grasping man than the baron, who would have sold his soul for thirty pieces of silver, and for forty almost have consented to a murder.

If, for purposes of their own, people wished to incarcerate their friends, and paid him well for it, their secret was safe with him, and the person was insane as long as he lived, if necessary.

But there his wickedness ceased, and his patients were generally made as happy and comfortable as it was possible to make them.

He, alone, held the secrets of his employers. Not a whisper of the truth ever escaped his lips, and to his attendants everybody was crazy, and must be watched and treated as such, no matter what were their pretensions to the contrary; so when poor little Rossie awoke one morning to find herself deserted, she became at once a lunatic, with this command upon her:

"Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

All liberty of action was gone, even her name was taken from her, and she was told that the Rosamond Hastings who she professed to be, was dead, and lying under the grass where the wild violets were growing, while she was Myra, the niece of the baron, who had come to the house the same night with the beautiful girl who was so sick, and who had died in a few days.

No wonder if for a time her brain reeled, and she was in danger of being in reality insane.

Poor little Rossie, she had enjoyed much and suffered much since the day when we last saw her waving a farewell to her friends from the deck of the steamer which bore her away.

Her brother had been uniformly kind and affectionate to her, but many things had arisen to shake her confidence in him, and to make her think it possible that he was not the honourable, upright man he professed to be.

The first shock came in Liverpool when he asked her to write to Everard for money, but he had explained that away so smoothly, and had made her believe that it would soon be paid, and her spirits had risen, and she seemed very happy for a time, until her brother's habits, and the set of people he kept around him on the Continent, began to trouble her again, and draw from her remonstrances at which he laughed gaily, calling her a nun who knew nothing of the world.

Then as the year wore on and they got farther away from home her letters were unanswered, and there began to steal over her a hunger and longing for England, which she could not conceal, and which took all the colour from her face and roundness from her form, until at last she was really sick with hope deferred and an anxiety to know why none of her letters were answered.

At Florence early in the spring she was ill in bed of a fever contracted in Rome, and aggravated by her desire to hear some word from home.

It was in vain that the treacherous doctor strove to comfort her by saying that the letters had miscarried, and that by-and-bye she would get them all in a pile.

She wanted them now, to-day, and her fever increased and her strength failed her more and more until the physician said she must leave Florence or die.

Then they went on to Botzen, where she began to rally a little, and where her brother, who had received a letter from Beatrice in answer to his own telling of Rossie's illness, gave it to her to read.

He could venture to do this as there was nothing in it which would awaken a suspicion of the deception he was practicing on Rossie by never mailing the many letters she wrote to her friends.

Bee's letter was full of anxiety, and love, and sympathy for the sick girl, of whose recovery, or at least improvement, she hoped soon to hear, and of pleasing anticipations of her return.

"She writes almost as if she thought I was going to die. I am not as bad as that," Rossie said, the great tears rolling down her cheeks at the thought of dying in that strange, far-away land.

This letter was better to Rossie than medicine, and she was soon able to go on towards Vienna, their ultimate destination. At Salzburg they halted for a few days, and there her brother brought to her one morning a stranger, whom he introduced as a friend and old acquaintance, Dr. Van Schoinser, to whom he said he owed his life, and who had a kind of Sanitarium for people diseased in body and mind, upon the river Danube.

Van Schoisner, who spoke English very well, was exceedingly kind and tender in his manners towards Rossie, whom he questioned very closely, so closely indeed, and in such a peculiar way, while he looked straight at her with eyes whose expression she did not like, that she first was annoyed, and then confused and bewildered, he talked so rapidly and gesticulated so fiercely, and finally contradicted herself two or three times in her statements with regard to her recent illness, and when he asked how she would like to go to his beautiful place on the river and

stay a few weeks while he treated her, she shrank away from him, and bursting into tears said she would not like it at all—that she did not need to be treated, as there was nothing the matter with her but homesickness, and only home could cure that.

Van Schoisner laughed, and stroked her hair, and called her his daughter, and said he would soon have her all right, and then went to her brother, between whom and himself there was a long conference in which both sold themselves, body and soul, to the Evil One, and were pledged to do his work.

"If she would only abandon that nonsense of hers about giving her fortune to that Forrest, as soon as she comes of age, and would share it with me, or let me manage it for her, I wouldn't do it, for by Jove, I've a kind of a liking for the girl," Dr. Matthewson said, as there came, even to him, a little prick of conscience, and drawing back from the dreadful thing he proposed to do, which was nothing more or less than literally burying Rossie alive inside a madhouse, where, so long as the price was paid, she would be as really dead to the world as if the grass was growing over her, and where the chances were that she would either die a speedy death, or, with her temperament, become a hopeless lunatic.

Money he must have, and as he believed in neither Heaven nor Hades, he had no scruples as to how he got it, only he would a little rather not murder one outright to get it. Every argument which he could think of had been brought to bear upon Rossie with a view to inducing her to keep the fortune willed her, but she had stood firm as a rock in her decision to make the whole over to Everard as soon as she came of age.

"It is not mine," she said. "If it were, I'd give it all to you, but now I cannot," and from this he could not change her, and so had recourse to the horrid scheme of which we have hinted.

He knew Van Schoisner well, and knew that his penurious nature grasped everything in its reach, whether lawful or not, and he sent for him to meet them at Salzburg to confer on important business.

So Van Schoisner went and and found what the business was, and talked to Rossie about her head, and brain, and cerebellum, and so forth, until she lost her wits and said she hadn't any cerebellum and never had.

She was home-sick, and that was all. This, of course was proof conclusive of a diseased state of mind.

A girl who hadn't any cerebellum, and who persisted in throwing away thousands of pounds, must be insane and dealt with accordingly.

So the bargain was made, and Rossie's fate was sealed. And then arose the question of the friends at home. What should be said to them to quiet all suspicion.

"She must be dead, of course," Van Schoisner said. "Nothing easier than that. A notice in the paper; a letter containing particulars; crape on your hat; a tear in your eye, and the thing is accomplished."

"Yes," returned the doctor, "but suppose that chap who is in love with her takes it into his head to come spooning after her grave, and inquires about her death, and wants to see the very room, and all that—and it would be like him to do it—what then?"

Von Schoisner rubbed his forehead thoughtfully a moment, and then exclaimed:

"I have it. Luck, as you English call it, is on our side. I have a niece in the country a few miles from here, very sick with consumption—in the last stages, and poor, too, as poor can be—with no friends but myself. I pay her board where she is, and visit her sometimes. She was born in London, and her father was an Englishman; so she speaks English perfectly, and might be your sister. I have thought of taking her to Haelder-Strauchsen, and will do so at once, though the journey will shorten her life. But that will not matter, as she must die very soon. Once at Haelder-Strauchsen she is your sister, and your sister is my niece. The attendants never ask questions nor talk. Do you comprehend?"

Dr. Matthewson thought he did, but left the matter wholly to Van Schoisner, who had, if possible, drank deeper from the cup of iniquity than himself.

As the result of this conversation there was brought to the hotel a few days later a white-faced, fair-haired girl, about Rossie's size and age, and in whose great blue eyes and about whose mouth and nose death was plainly written.

They called her Myra, and said she was Van Schoisner's niece, whom he was taking to his home for better care than she could have in the country.

No one attended her. Her uncle could do all that was necessary, he said, and he seemed very kind to her, and stayed by her constantly upon the boat when at last they started for home, accompanied by Dr. Matthewson and Rossie, who was greatly interested in the sick girl.

It was night when they reached the landing where they were to stop, and from the windows of the close carriage Rossie saw nothing of the country through which they passed for a few miles, but was conscious at last that they were entering spacious and beautiful grounds, and stopping before a large, square building, with two wings on either side.

(To be Continued)

POOR LOO.

By the Author of "Dan's Treasure," "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," etc.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CONSTANCE BELIEVES SHE SHALL SUCCEED.

"Love that of every woman's heart
Must have the whole and not a part;
That to her is nature's plan
More than ambition is to man."
LONGFELLOW.

DINNER has been over for some time, and Herbert and Constance Dorset sit round the fire with their two guests.

The wind is howling among the trees outside the hotel, rain is falling heavily, and a sense of added comfort in the contrast of the warm room and the raging elements from which they are sheltered dispose the party to be talkative, and to ignore the card table set out at a little distance from them.

It is poor Loo whom they are discussing, and Robert Marker is telling them how he found the child, with little anecdotes of her childhood which are interesting at least to one of his listeners.

"And you really think it possible?" Constance asked, but without any show of rancor or bitterness, "that she can be the child of any but very poor, vulgar and ignorant people?"

"Yes, I do think so, unreasonable as it may appear," was the ready reply, with a bright smile on his still boyish, handsome face, "and I have some ground besides Loo's natural refinement and beauty for my opinion."

"Indeed! Pray what is it?"

"The only woman she spoke of at the time or seemed to remember she called 'Suma,' evidently not an English name, and one day when we were walking through Westbourne Grove the child suddenly clutched my hand, and pointing to an ayah walking with some white children, exclaimed, 'There is Suma.'

"I looked, and Loo ran up to the woman, but she shrank back evidently disappointed, and spoke some words in Hindostanee, which I could not understand, then she turned back to Miss Travers and me, saying 'It is not Suma, and she does not know anything about her.'"

"And what do you deduce from that?" inquired Herbert.

"That Loo is the daughter of some English lady and gentleman whose coloured nurse has either run away with or lost her. We may never discover who her parents really are, but you can see that there is no trace of colour in her."

"Yes, I can see that, but I must say I think your conclusion rather romantic," replied the young man, "not, however, that one could attach any idea of vulgarity or ignoble origin with Loo."

"More singular things than what you suppose to be the truth in this case, happen daily," here interposed General Speke. "My brother tells a story that might be the very beginning and clue to this if one could only piece them together."

"Do you remember it?" asked Herbert.

"Yes, I think so. At least the general outline. It is many years ago now. He was captain of a large steamship trading between Bombay and Suez, and they were wrecked in the Indian Ocean.

"Among his passengers was a lady with her child of a few months old, and her ayah who had also her child with her that must have been about the same age as that of her mistress.

"Before the vessel foundered the lady died, leaving her child to the joint care of my brother and her nurse, who appeared to be greatly attached to the little thing.

"The condition of the vessel in the storm that was raging grew worse and worse; no hope of succour seemed to remain.

"Some of the crew took to the boats and were drowned, and where every life was at stake you may suppose that that of an infant was scarcely thought of.

"My brother tells the story far more graphically than I can, for he saw and took part in it, while I was thousands of miles away.

"I have heard him say that when their plight seemed to be at the very worst the coloured nurse who had charge of the two babies jumped into a boat that was putting off from the vessel, having thrown one of the children into the boat, while the other fell into the sea.

"Strange as it may seem, this latter child was rescued, taken back into the vessel, and a few hours afterwards another ship came in sight, and took off the crew and passengers from the 'Lurline,' which was now a mere wreck.

"A few weeks after in fulfilment of his promise to the dead lady, my brother took the child thus rescued to the lady's relations. I may not mention their name, but they are one of the proudest and richest families in England.

"But the most singular part remains. This child was dark, and though not repudiated was received under protest and with suspicion, the conviction being that the child whom the nurse had taken away was in reality the heiress, while the one left behind was the offspring of the coloured woman."

"But what became of the nurse?" asked Constance; "was she drowned?"

"No, it was believed not. She was traced to China, from thence to America, and there lost. Very many years have passed, no effort has been spared to find her, but in vain. She and the child may have died or may be wandering about poor and unknown."

"And what has become of the coloured child?" asked Robert Marker, deeply interested.

"She has been brought up as the heiress to the property, and it may be difficult to disprove her claim."

"Perhaps, after all, she may be the true heiress; is she quite dark?"

"No, I believe not. The nurse was a half-caste, and her husband was a white man. It is a very pretty muddle as it stands. The hope has been all these years that the nurse may be found, for they seem to have placed great confidence in the woman, and to believe that she would not have been a willing party to such a fraud."

"How long ago was this?" asked the surgeon, an odd idea entering his head.

"About twenty years ago, I should think," was the reply.

And Robert Marker's hastily formed theory collapsed. Loo could not have been the lost child.

Twenty years ago must have been at least two or three before Loo was born.

Herbert Dorset however, more shrewdly than Robert Marker, took the colonel's estimate of time just so much as it was worth, and that a mere guess, and, though he asked no further questions, fearing that if he did he should excite suspicion, he noted the name of the vessel lost, and of which Captain Speke was the commander, and he determined to test the idea that had suddenly sprung up in his mind that Loo and the missing heiress were identical.

Even judging calmly later on in the evening, and when his guests had gone, the possibility of the mystery surrounding Loo's birth and parentage being thus solved grew into a probability.

Here was a coloured woman lost with a white child. Then came the white child who had belonged to a coloured woman, and had been severed from her by a violent accident.

This also explained why Loo had never been sought or claimed by her mother or nurse, whichever Suma might be.

His long residence in the East had given Herbert an insight into the character and tendencies of Hindoo men and women, and he could quite understand that having lost the child the ayah would sit down and moan and cry for her lost darling, or try to chase away the memory of her grief in the fumes of opium, instead of starting up and resolutely and methodically appealing to the law to enable her to find her.

Another difficulty, even if she had started to do this, would start in her way.

If the child were not really her own the law would punish her for keeping it from its family rather than hand it back to her, for of course she must know of the change.

Indeed, the more Herbert thought the matter over the more convinced he was that the affair was worth sifting out, and the more determined he was to do it.

And meanwhile Constance was playing her part with much more tact and skill than might have been expected from her want of experience.

Very sweet and gentle she seemed; the discontented, hard expression of her face had been smoothed out.

Perhaps, if minutely examined, the faintest suspicion of pale pink powder might have been discovered, and would account for the soft bloom which otherwise could have been thought to be a reflection from the soft, blush rose-coloured dress in which she was arrayed.

She had set herself to please, dressed herself for conquest, and to a certain extent she succeeded.

Major-General Speke looked at her more than once with matrimonial thoughts intent, and Robert Marker thought how sad it was that the blight of unmerited suspicion should have fallen on so fair a life, and, as pity is akin to love, so the latter feeling might have grown out of the former if his heart had not been already too full of the image of another to admit of even the temporary presence of a rival.

Still, Robert Marker's manner when he addressed women was unintentionally deceptive.

His soft, beautiful grey eyes, with their long lashes, had a look in them apt to make a woman's heart thrill, and believe that only for herself could they ever wear such a tender expression, while he, on his part, was unconscious of the influence they exercised.

Thus it was with Constance Dorset this evening; she believed that her efforts and her hopes were not in vain, that she was already on the road to success, and if the memory of poor little Freddy's dead face did sometimes come in to cloud the brightness of the future she had mapped out for herself, she pushed it aside, closed her eyes to it as she had closed her heart to any throb or feeling of pity, in that dark early morning so long ago, when she made herself liable to the penalty of a life for a life.

But the present and future looks bright—brighter indeed than any portion of the past has been.

Robert Marker shows no inclination to shun her society, on the contrary he seeks it, for of the Talboys he knows little and the Colonel's wife is not quite according to his taste, and when a man who works hard the greater part of his life gets away for a holiday the company of pleasant persons with whom he can be on friendly if not intimate terms adds greatly to this enjoyment.

Thus day after day went on and found the man to whom Loo had given her heart spending whole hours of the day in attendance upon the woman whom she both disliked and feared.

Matters however could not long continue like this.

Constance was too impatient, every day brought them nearer to the end of their stay, and anyone watching the signs of the time could perceive that a crisis was at hand.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AT LAST!

"There is a voice in the autumn blast
That wafts the falling leaf,
When the glowing scene is fading fast,
For the hour of bloom is brief;
It tells of life, of its sure decay,
Of earthly splendours that pass away."

K. A. Ware.

How familiar everything seemed when Loo and Mabel got back to their old home at Notting Hill Gate.

The three tall poplars that stood at the bottom of the front garden bowed their stately heads as they were swayed by the wind, as though in greeting to their owner, who after so many years' absence had now come back to them.

In the back garden, though most of the flowers were fading, a few stray violets peeped up, and Loo gathered some of them, and hid them in her bosom, then danced about the house arranging one piece of furniture, patting another for old acquaintance sake, and seeming so thoroughly delighted to be at home again that Mabel could not help smiling and feeling glad that she had yielded to the girl's exaggerated terror, and had come back to the place that was henceforth to be their home.

Awaiting them, however, they found a letter from Lady Travers, a characteristic epistle, but which they were too amused with to think of ignoring or resenting.

"My dear Mabel," it ran.

"I have at last a house of my own to which I can invite you. Of course my invitation includes the young person whom against my wish you adopted, and without whom I know I may look for you in vain.

"Your Affectionate Aunt,

"Margaret Travers."

"I would rather not go," said Loo, when the letter was read. "Lady Travers never liked me, and I don't remember caring very much for her. I will stay at home and practice and amuse myself by going over some of my old work. I shall not feel at all dull or lonely, and if I do I will take one of the servants over with me and call on Mrs. Dorset. I don't suppose there is the least fear of Herbert coming back to stay at Grove House."

"I should think not," was the reply; "but I will go with you and see Elaine to-morrow; you will then be able to go there as often as you like; she was always fond of you, and your old governess, Miss Finch that was, will also be glad to see you."

Miss Travers was right, her sister was glad to see Loo, she reminded her, but not painfully, of the darling boy she had lost, and time, that healer of so many wounds, had softened what had once seemed as though it would be her death blow, and had enabled her to think with pitying compassion of the wretched girl who, to spite her, had taken an innocent life.

The household at the Grove had changed; Mr. Dorset's hair was white as silver, deep lines marked the fair face of his still young wife, and the only child now left them, born just before poor little Freddy's death, was a big girl over eight years old, whom both of her parents were doing their best to spoil.

Many were the questions asked the two travellers about their own doings.

The Dorsets were surprised and not displeased to hear that they had met Herbert abroad, but when the name of Constance was uttered an ominous silence and chill fell over both the father and step-mother of the guilty woman, till Loo, noticing, was silenced by it.

Not so Mabel, however.

Little dreaming of the cause of her expulsion from her father's house, Miss Travers pleaded the girl's case, pointed out how miserable and lonely she was, the bad effect it would have upon her chances of getting married being banished from her father's house, and urged her sister as a matter of principle and duty to give Constance one more trial and invite her to come home once again.

Very patiently Mrs. Dorset listened to all this.

She had promised her husband not to reveal his daughter's guilt and she would not. To leave her to the punishment of her own conscience, and if that were slight, so much the worse for her.

But here her forbearance had been stretched to its utmost limit, and she said very calmly but with a severity for which her sister would never have given her credit:

"I don't want to hear of Constance again, Mabel. She and I will never live in the same house again; probably she is as determined upon that point as I am, and it will be a kindness to all of us never to mention her name. It is as distasteful to you, my dear, as it is to me, I think," she added, turning to her husband.

"Quite," was the stern response.

And then Loo knew that, though Mabel still doubted Constance Dorset's guilt had been proved, her parents were convinced of it, and England would no longer be a safe refuge for her.

Thus the visit to Grove House passed over. Loo was invited to walk over whenever she felt inclined, and two or three days after Mabel Travers set out to visit Lady Travers.

What possessed her small ladyship to go and locate herself at Little Bampton, on the Sussex coast, it would be difficult to say, but here she had determined to spend her winters, and to return to London each spring.

For, as we have already heard, Lady Travers was no longer dependent upon her niece, her brother having left her a thousand a year, and, late as it was in life, the vain little woman intended to get some enjoyment out of it.

There are various kinds of enjoyment. Byron tells us "Revenge is sweet, especially to women," and when he wrote this he must have been thinking of such a woman as Lady Travers, for to her revenge was sweet—sweeter than the very breath of life.

"Well?" she asked, sharply, glancing towards the door as Mabel came into the room where she sat, and was about to offer to kiss her. "Where is your shadow?"

"My shadow," repeated Miss Travers, not for the moment comprehending her.

"Yes; the girl you could never travel a yard without. I invited her to please you. Where is she?"

"If you mean Loo, my adopted daughter or niece, she is at home," replied Mabel, with grave dignity.

"Why didn't you bring her?" asked the old woman, snappishly; "I told you to."

"Yes, but she didn't wish to come," in the same freezing tones.

"But I wish to see her. Has she grown ugly?"

"No; some people think her very beautiful; Herbert for instance."

"Ah! have you seen him?"

"Yes, we left him behind us at Spa."

"And he admires her?"

"It looked like it."

"You don't mean to say you will disgrace the family by trapping him into a marriage with her?"

"I hope not, for her sake," replied Mabel, warmly, "but don't trouble yourself about Loo's



[ON THE TRAIL OF A BEAUTY.]

prospects, aunt; I can take care of them. How have you been getting on, and what made you come to winter here?"

"I like the place, and the place suits me. The people here have due regard for persons of rank, and I am not expected to meet any butcher's or baker's wife. See, I have been buying some curiosities; that little twisted brooch, with its forget-me-not of diamonds, looks quaint in its old setting, doesn't it? When I die I shall leave this to Constance Dorset."

"Yes, it is pretty," absently.

It seemed sad, almost grotesque to see this old woman with withered fingers, black eyes, and hair of shining silver, with one foot already in the grave, for she has aged greatly since we first met her, but with her love of diamonds and finery still as strong upon her as ever.

"So you haven't got a husband in all these years?" she went on again after a time in her sharp, shrill voice.

"No," smilingly.

"I suppose you have had a chance of being married?"

"Most women have that," vaguely.

"Of course I know that, but I mean while you have been away."

"None that I should have cared to take, you may be sure. Loo will be married before me, no doubt, and will send me one of her children to fill her place."

"Loo married? Ah! she must be getting quite a woman; I should like to see her. It was very selfish of you, Mabel, to leave her behind. One wants something bright and young in the house to remind us of our own youth. Mind you bring her next time. I have half a mind to have her telegraphed for at once."

In unfeigned surprise Mabel Travers looked at her aunt.

Had she suddenly gone mad?"

Ten minutes ago she was speaking slightingly of Loo as though she bore her no good will; now she was regretting her absence, and talking of sending for her.

What could it mean?

The old woman's memory must be failing her, otherwise she would certainly not contradict herself in this manner.

She coldly said, however:

"No, I cannot have Loo sent for, she has never travelled alone: perhaps the next time I come to see you she may accompany me. Now, I think I will go and change my dress."

With which she left the room and Lady Travers still holding the quaint diamond brooch in her hand."

"Forget-me-not" she repeated, and a wicked, malignant expression came over her withered face. "No, I don't think she ever will forget me if I get the chance."

Meanwhile Loo was in London and was doing not a very wise thing.

It was rare for her to be left alone by Mabel, and after the first hour or two time hung heavily upon her hands and a feeling of restlessness came over her urging her to go out for a brisk walk in the keen, crisp air.

For a time she resisted the temptation, thinking Mabel would not approve of it, but at length the desire to tread on the grass in Kensington Gardens became too much for her, and hastily dressing she told one of the servants that she was going for a walk and should perhaps go on as far as Mrs. Dorset's.

"Shall I go with you, miss?" questioned the woman, for even in the short time she had been with the two ladies she rightly guessed that the elder would not approve of the younger one going out alone.

"No, I don't think it is worth while" was the reply; "besides, I can't wait for you. But you can come after me, if you like. I will walk to Kensington Gardens to the round pond. I quite remember the way and you can follow me there. You won't be more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour in dressing, I suppose."

"No, miss, I won't be longer than that. I must just change my dress and put on a pair of boots; you'll keep near the pond, miss, won't you?"

"Yes, you needn't hurry," and so the young lady walked off, but she had not proceeded very far before she wished she had waited for the parlour-maid to accompany her.

Perhaps it was her dress.

It was rather foreign and uncommon looking, it is true; but she had worn it in Spa many times, and had thought it quiet, but now a little shabby, as the dead leaf green is so soon apt to become.

True, she never thought that it was her face that attracted such attention, yet this was the case, so much so that a man dressed as a gentleman, and coming out of the Metropolitan Railway Station, gave a perceptible start, stood still, looked after her a second or two, and then, abandoning the appointment he had come to keep, set off to follow her.

Blissfully unconscious that she was thus being tracked, however, Loo walked on her way until she came to Kensington Gardens, which she entered and made her way direct to the round pond.

The man followed her, at a distance at first, but arrived at the piece of water it was not so easy to hide his purpose, so he now walked round the pond in an opposite direction from her.

First of all with the object of not seeming to follow her, second, with the intention of getting another good look at her face and comparing it with a portrait in crayons which some people might have taken for a fancy sketch, that he took from his pocket.

"Odd if it is the girl I want," he mused, keeping her well in view; "to think I should spend a whole fortnight on the Continent looking for her, and then should just run against her like this. But I ought to have a run of luck considering how I failed in that affair of Drayton Abbey."

From which it may be gathered that the man who had thus accidentally stumbled upon poor Loo was the same who had been twice engaged to find her—

Mr. George Gorlidge.

(*To be Continued.*)



[THE OLD MAN'S BLESSING.]

A WOMAN SPURNED.

CHAPTER V.

"Haste me to know it!"
"I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe's wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this?"
SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Miss Crofton entered the parlour the professor's wife was saying to Brenton:

"I am most happy to welcome you to Selwood, at last, Mr. Brenton. Frequently as your friend visits us, I have thought it singular that you held yourself so persistently aloof from us."

"I seldom visit," replied her guest, apologetically. "That must be my excuse, Mrs. Tardy. I am only a man of business, as you know, and I rarely leave the city. It seems strange to me to be so far from it now, but Manvers insisted on this visit, and I yielded to him, as I always do when I cannot help myself," and he laughed pleasantly.

"I know very well that two old people like the professor and myself cannot expect young men to care to come to us, but we have two attractions now, Mr. Brenton. Our nieces live with us, and one of them you have never seen. Ah, here comes Emma now."

Miss Crofton met Manvers with her sweetest smile, and spoke a few words of friendly greeting before turning to be presented to the stranger. He was surprised and dazzled by the brilliant figure in its elegant evening dress and flashing jewels.

Emma had fine shoulders and lovely arms—both were bare, and gems of price glittered upon them. She looked her very best this evening, and Brenton said to himself:

"What did Julian mean by saying that this woman is only not bad looking? Scant praise that for one with her pretensions. By Jove! she's worth two of that pink and white doll who has enchained him. She knows a thing or two, I'll bet, and she'd help a man along without much scruple when he got into a tight place. I believe she is my 'affinity,' as some idiots call those who are attracted to each other from the first hour of meeting. I do believe I could willingly pass under the yoke, if those fair hands are to rivet it about my neck. Well, we will see what we shall see—when it comes to pass."

While these thoughts passed through his mind he was uttering the usual commonplaces with an air of graceful deference which most favourably impressed the lady to whom they were addressed.

She forgot the plainness, and decided that she had rarely seen finer eyes than the keen black orbs which flashed beneath Brenton's heavy brows.

He had passed a summer in America; had seen all the attractions of Paris, and they had many subjects to discuss which afforded interest to both.

Thus they fell naturally into a strain of talk which seemed to bring them nearer to each other than their brief acquaintance seemed to warrant, and both speculated as to what was to grow of this meeting, with the vague feeling that fate had brought them together for some purpose of its own, undefined as yet, but mistily looming in the future.

When supper was announced they went together into the brilliantly lighted dining-room, and sat down to the flower-decked table side by side; but in the delicacies before him Emma found that she had a rival, for Brenton ceased to talk while he enjoyed the good things provided by his hostess.

She had little appetite herself, for she had eaten a quantity of fruit during the afternoon, so she occupied herself with watching the two who sat on the opposite side of the table, and hated both with all her heart.

There was nothing demonstrative in the manner of either, and a stranger would never have singled them out as lovers; but Emma knew what was impending, and her jealous heart raged against her rival as only that of a passionate and disappointed woman can.

When the evening meal was over the young people strolled into the vestibule, and thence into the grounds.

At first they kept together, and Miss Crofton betrayed her passionate desire to prevent any decisive explanation between the lovers on that night by persisting in keeping near them.

Why she did this she could hardly have explained herself, for certainly all hope of her own success in winning Manvers to herself had perished long ago.

She could not bear to know that Agnes would be made happy by his words, respond to them as he wished, while she walked alone in spirit, unloved, uncared for by the one man she had known in her whole life to whom she could have given her undivided affection.

Yet she only valued Julian Manvers for the grand beauty of his person; the finer and nobler gifts which distinguished him were of small importance to her.

Of "the earth, earthy," she only thought of his physical superiority to all the other men she had known, and raged in her soul that a girl she considered almost a nobody should have the power to fix his affections on herself, and hold them so securely that her lover was blind to the attractions of all other women.

Brenton marvelled at her determination to keep within hearing of the lovers; but his shrewd insight enabled him soon to arrive at a pretty accurate comprehension of the situation.

"Her fancy is taken by the fine person of Julian, and she hates the other girl because she is preferred by him," was the thought that passed through his mind. "But she is duller than I thought her if she imagines that her nature and his could ever coalesce. Fire and water could as well attempt to dwell together. Bah! what idiots the most sensible women can make of themselves about an exceptionally handsome man, while they overlook those who are worth a hundred of him."

Determined to make a diversion in favour of

his friend, and a little piqued on his own account, Brenton suddenly paused near a rustic bower covered with climbing plants in full bloom, and said:

"This is a lovely nook, and the moon is just rising above the tree-tops. Shall we pause here a few moments, Miss Crofton, and enjoy the rare beauty of the night? Excuse me for detaining you, but I so seldom have an opportunity to admire the beauties of nature that I naturally wish to make the most of this one."

Emma made an impatient movement, and said:

"The others will go on, and we shall lose sight of them. My aunt is very particular and old-fashioned in her notions, and she will not like it if we separate from our companions. I think we had better keep up with them, Mr. Brenton."

"I pledge myself to take the best care of you, Miss Crofton, and, to tell you the truth, I think we are rather in the way of our friends just now. I know that Manvers came down here this evening to say something very particular to Miss Temple, and it will be best to afford him the opportunity. Mrs. Tardy will forgive us, I daresay, for Julian has asked for and obtained the consent of the professor and his wife to win their niece if he can."

Emma became ghastly pale, even under her rouge, but she struggled for self-control, and after a brief pause contemptuously repeated:

"If he can! I fancy Mr. Manvers has few doubts as to his success in his wooing, for it is plain enough to be seen that Agnes Temple is desperately in love with him."

"So much the better," replied Brenton, with a shrug, "for he is equally demented about her. It is quite an old story. They were children together, and have been attached to each other for years. In no other way can I account for Julian's devotion to a merely passable girl like Miss Temple, who has little fortune, and no expectations."

"Abuse the rival, and thus win on the heiress," he thought, as he uttered these words, and their affect on the listener answered his expectations. Colour came back to her face; the dangerous gleam in her pale eyes was still there, but she suffered herself to be drawn toward the seat, and sunk down upon it, inviting Brenton, by a gesture, to place himself beside her. But he stood a moment before doing so, looking down on her in the glamour of moonlight, and thinking that she was well worth winning, even if her fancy had fixed itself, for a time, on Julian Manvers.

"She is too sensible to be sentimental," he said to himself; "she is only furious because she could not take another girl's lover from her, and, if she dared, she would scratch her face, and tear up her best clothes; that would be a peculiarly feminine vengeance, but Miss Crofton is too superfine a lady to go to such vulgar lengths as that."

At length he dropped into the seat she invited him to take, and as he did so, Emma said:

"Your estimate of Miss Temple agrees perfectly with my own, and the infatuation of your friend is inexplicable to me. Commonplace to the last degree, I consider her; but that is the reason, I suppose, why she is so popular among the fogyish set my aunt collects around her. She is of their calibre, and of course they prefer her to a finer nature when they are brought in contact with it. I have had many humiliations to bear since I came hither, Mr. Brenton, and seeing this girl always preferred before me, is, by no means, the least one. Do not misunderstand me; I am not now referring to your friend. From his first visit here after I came I knew that Agnes was the magnet that attracted him hither, and handsome as he is, I had no desire to interfere with her claims. Such men as Mr. Manvers are rarely the successful ones in this world, and I adore success—nothing would tempt me to link my fortunes with those of any man who is incapable of commanding it."

Brenton fully understood how much this disclaimer was worth, but he said, with a bow:

"I can only marvel at Julian's blindness that he did not discern the true gem when it flashed before him, and put aside the imitation one as unworthy of possession. It was well for him, however, that he did not do so, as I perceive there would have been no chance for him. He is a good fellow, but he will never command success, nor does he wish it beyond a certain point. Independence in fortune is all he aims at, and that attained, he will retire from business, and devote himself to some crotchet which has taken possession of his brain. Now I am different—nothing less than millions will satisfy me, and I am confident of acquiring them, if life and health are granted me. Why not I as well as others? Other men have climbed up from the lowest round of the ladder of fortune, and to emulate them—to rival them, if possible, seems to me the only ambition worth living for."

He watched keenly the effect of his words, for, by some species of clairvoyance, he fathomed the nature of the woman beside him, and knew that she was as near his counterpart as it is possible for another to be.

The evil in one coalesced with the same principle in the other, and both felt that the attraction was mutual.

What might their union portend to others?—especially to those against whom they had any grudge or spite?

Emma lifted her eyes to the dark face that she had lately thought so unprepossessing, and saw in it a strength and power which fascinated her.

She enthusiastically said:

"I like to hear a man talk like that. It gives me the idea that he has something more than is ordinarily given to mortals. A strong will, and steady, energetic action can accomplish all that a man sets his heart on. I wish you success in your efforts, Mr. Brenton, and I only wish that I were a man, that I might enter on a similar career; but we poor women can do nothing for ourselves in comparison with what the other sex has accomplished. A woman of small fortune must be contented with what she has, and make no effort herself to increase her store."

"A way is open to her if she is unmarried. She can give herself and her fortune into hands capable of taking care of her in good style, and rendering her insignificant possessions a splendid fortune in the course of a few years. Such a thing is easily done, if the man is worthy of the confidence reposed in him. It is a pity that you are not a man, Miss Crofton, for I think you and I could get on well together as partners, and when Julian retires from our firm, I shall need another to take his place."

He spoke lightly, but there was meaning in his words, and Emma comprehended that, in time, he might ask her to form a partnership with himself more indissoluble than that which now existed between him and Manvers. She was flattered by the conquest she thought she had made in so brief an acquaintance, and coquettishly said:

"This is a strange conversation for us to hold when we are almost strangers to each other, Mr. Brenton. I do not know how it is, but I can speak more freely with you already than I have done with anyone since my poor papa died. Here I am cut off from everything like sympathy, for the people around me do not understand me; but that is not surprising, for I have nothing in common with them. My aunt, even, is indifferent to my happiness, and she wounds me every day by the preference for Agnes which she openly shows. If my Uncle Henry had left it in her power, I think she would alienate from me the inheritance that must come to me at her death, and bestow it on her favourite."

"So she is to have another fortune in addition to her own," was a mental comment of the listener on Emma's clever intimation that she had expectations which might be realised in a few years; for Mrs. Tardy was no longer young, and such apparently healthy women often drop off suddenly.

He impressively said:

"I am greatly flattered, Miss Crofton, that you feel the confidence in me which has induced you to speak to me as a friend. I think I can understand your position here, and I must say that such a woman as you are has wandered from her true sphere in coming to bury herself in a hum-drum country neighbourhood like this. You should be at the head of a brilliant establishment in London, and rule society as its fairest and most attractive autocrat."

Emma smiled faintly, but she quietly said:

"You flatter me, Mr. Brenton. I have been accustomed to play my part in the fashionable world in a creditable manner, but I never aspired to be a leader. I do not accept my present life voluntarily; I have enough of my own to live on, even in as expensive a place as London; but my father exacted of me a promise on his death-bed that I would come to my aunt, and remain with her till I have a home of my own. That is why I stay in this most uncongenial place where another is preferred before me. I hope that you will not think me meanly jealous of a girl who uses all her arts to win on those who can advance her interests. I only feel how hard it is that where I should be first my presence is only tolerated, while she receives all the petting and consideration which is justly my due."

In his heart Brenton thought it would be a difficult thing to make a pet of so self-poised a woman as the one beside him, but he had his own game to play, and he sympathetically replied:

"I think I quite understand you, Miss Crofton, and far be it from me to sit up in judgment upon you. You must indeed suffer cruelly in the false position in which you are placed, and if you will pardon me for giving it, my advice is, that you shall change it as soon as possible. With your beauty and accomplishments you are thrown away absolutely in this dull, commonplace country neighbourhood. Since your aunt cannot alienate your inheritance, why should you remain near her, especially as you are not happy in your new surroundings?"

"You forget the promise I made to my father," breathed Emma, with a sigh. "Besides, my aunt is the only relative I have, and the world would talk if I left her house and established myself elsewhere. No; dreary as my life is, I must remain where fate has cast me, until——"

She paused, looked down, and a faint glow came into her cheeks to deepen the artistic touches of her skilful maid.

With the moonlight streaming full upon her regular features, bestowing its marvellous charm on her fair complexion, she looked like a statue suddenly waking into life, and the man beside her felt that, if not beautiful, she possessed enough of the elements of beauty to attract him, unimpressionable as he had believed himself.

He bent towards her and softly repeated her last word:

"'Until?' Until what happens? Shall I complete your sentence? Until the prince comes and claims his own. Ah! he will be a happy man, Miss Crofton, and for your sake I hope he will not be long in making his appearance."

She arose abruptly, and said:

"We have lingered here a long time. We had better go back to the house, as it will be useless to look for those sentimental lovers. They would not thank us, either, for interrupting them. Forget what I have been imprudent enough to say to one so slightly known to me as you are, Mr. Brenton. I hardly know what you will think of me after such an exposé of my feelings as I have made to you."

"I think you almost an angel," was the gallant reply; and Brenton made a grimace under his heavy beard.

CHAPTER. VI.

She touched the ripples with her hands,
And when the rising moon shone bright
She seemed an angel sitting there,
So pure, beneath the silver light.

THE two so well matched in craft and finesse wandered on slowly toward the house, both using all their arts to captivate, and both influenced by mercenary considerations alone.

As Emma had said, she was heartily weary of the life she led, and disgusted with the thought of its longer continuance. In her younger days she had claimed many admirers, but genuine,

disinterested love had never been offered her, and she was acute enough to know that the reputed wealth of her father had alone attracted the most of her suitors. She was no longer in her first youth, and this keen, wordly-wise man was, perhaps, the best chance she would ever have to secure what she most deeply coveted—a brilliant position in the future, and money enough to spend in every extravagant fancy that might enter the mind.

That was her ideal of life, and she thought, from all she had heard of him, that Brenton would soon be able to gratify her caprices, so far as wealth could do so. As to the man himself, he fascinated her in some inexplicable manner, in spite of his ordinary appearance.

On his side, Brenton weighed her present fortune and fine expectations against her other disadvantages, and decided in his own mind that the advice of Manvers to woo the heiress was worth following.

This lovely home would be hers on the decease of Mrs. Tardy, and he knew that the large orchards attached to the place brought in a handsome annual income, which might be doubled by a more energetic proprietor than the professor.

He began to speculate on the probale lease of life that mignt be granted to the old lady, and wondered why elderly people would persist in living on, when their presence in the world could so easily be dispensed with by those nearly connected with them.

These thoughts floated through his mind, while he exerted his utmost efforts to interest his companion, and to draw her into resuming the confidential tone she had assumed in the early part of their conversation.

But Emma thought she had said enough of her own grievances to enlist his sympathies, and she now exhibited to him another phase of her character.

She became gay and brilliant—sketching her experiences of foreign society with graphic skill, and showing him how widely severed from her present life was the one she had led while her father lived.

All she said tended to show him what cause for discontent she had with the monotony of the present days, and he thought that it would not be a difficult task to induce her to exchange her "maiden meditations fancy free" for a gay home in London and all the excitements of city society.

They loitered long, and when they reached the house they found that the lovers had returned, and the tableau which greeted their eyes as they entered the vestibule informed them of what had happened.

What she saw filled the heart of Emma with rage so intense that for a moment she felt like rushing forward and striking down the girl she had been unable to rival.

In the parlour beyond stood Mrs. Tardy, holding the hands of Agnes and her lover tenderly clasped together in both her own, while the professor had lifted his in benediction over their bowed heads.

He uttered a fervent prayer for their happiness and well-being, and then taking Manvers' hand in his own, said, in broken tones:

"We give to you the light and life of our home, Julian; it is not just to withhold her from you, much as she is to us, for you love each other with that love which is a crown and a blessing to life. But see that you do your part faithfully, young man, and give her no cause to regret the step she has this night taken in pledging her troth to you. It is an awful trust—that of a tender, loving human spirit to whom, from this hour, you are guide, protector, best friend, or most fatal foe, for more deadly foes cannot be found than man and wife when utterly estranged from each other. That this will be a true marriage I firmly believe; therefore, without misgiving, I pronounce my blessing upon it."

"Umph! he had better preach a sermon at once," muttered Emma, who had impetuously drawn her companion with herself to the threshold of the parlour door.

Unaware of their presence, Manvers took the bride thus given to him into his arms and kissed her on brow and lips.

He then fervently said:

"As Heaven is my witness, I will be all to my Agnes that man can be to woman. I will cherish her and care for her as the darling of my life, the joy of my heart. I know how much you sacrifice in giving her up, and I thank you for the gift—for the confidence you have in me as her future guardian."

Mrs. Tardy was weeping profusely, but she wiped away her tears, and kissing the young man on the cheek, affectionately said:

"We accept you as our son, Julian, for Agnes is as a daughter to us, and her husband must learn to regard us in the light of parents. You will bring her to us often, after you are married, though I hope you will not be in too great a hurry to take our child from us."

"Make the sacrifice complete by giving her to me as soon as may be, dear madame, and I promise after a brief bridal trip to bring Agnes back to spend the remainder of the summer with you. This is my holiday season, and I must avail myself of it to have my bride to myself for a few weeks. After that, you may claim her again, till we make arrangements for our housekeeping."

"It shall be as you wish, Julian," said the professor. "Though Agnes is so dear to us, we have no right to keep her from you now that she has chosen you from all the world as her best and truest friend. There is no obstacle to your marriage, and it may as well take place now as later. The pang of giving up one who has made herself so dear to us, will be no greater now than at a future time, and we must not allow selfishness to stand in the way of your happiness."

Agnes had hidden her face upon the professor's breast, but she now raised her head and tenderly kissed him.

"My darling uncle, how good you are to us," she murmured. "How can we thank you?"

"By getting married at once, and being perfectly happy for ever afterward," he said, with an attempt at playfulness to conceal the sense of bereavement which had suddenly come upon him as he realised that his pet and darling must go from him, never again to be his own special property. He had learned to love her, and to lean on her as the prop of his old age, but new duties claimed her, a life of usefulness lay before her, and he must give her up to the happy man who was so fortunate as to have won her to love him with all her heart.

"Well—if Proff says it I suppose it must be so," was Mrs. Tardy's comment; and turning briskly toward the door in which Emma stood, she went on:

"You're just in time, Emma, to congratulate our bride and groom. Come in, you and Mr. Brenton, and say as many nice things to them as you can think of. I am delighted though I am crying like an old simpleton."

The two came forward at this call, and Brenton grasped Manvers' hand, and said:

"I hope you'll never repent of this evening's work, old fellow, and that's about as good a wish as can be made in spite of its equivocal sound. If there is no repentance, there is satisfaction, of course, and to be contented under the yoke of matrimony is as much as can be expected of any man."

His friend smiled radiantly, and said:

"Contentment is the best part of happiness, so I accept your congratulations, singularly as they are worded. I would not exchange my lot with that of any man living, be he prince or kaiser."

"Oh, I daresay; you are in the first glamour of acceptance, and I can only say that I hope the halo will not cease to encircle the wife, as it now makes the bride a divinity in your eyes."

"I have no faith to believe that Agnes will make me realise the truth of an old line," said Manvers, on whom the tone of Brenton jarred unpleasantly. "I have no misgivings as to our future, I assure you."

(To be Continued)

CONVICTED.

CHAPTER IX.

"WHAT did it all mean, Alex?" inquired her father, as they sat down upon a sofa, and the girl clung to him in a strange trembling. "Spiridion was trying to carry you off by force."

"Yes, papa, and he would have succeeded but for you. He asked me to be his wife, and when I refused he declared that he would take me by force."

"He will renew his attempt," said Mr. Strange, anxiously. "I know Spiridion's reputation. He never gives up anything upon which he sets his heart. He will come back with all his band and take you by force. We are not strong enough to resist him, and half our labourers are in sympathy with him."

"Then what can we do?"

"Our peace is broken up. I have lived here sixteen years without being molested, but henceforth our lives in this place will be one of persecution. Greece is no longer a refuge for us. We must find a new home."

"But where can we go?"

"I must study the map. I will think out a plan to-night. You are pale and trembling still, Alex. You must go to bed, my darling. I shall not lose sight of you again for many hours at a time, my little girl. Whatever I have lost, I have you left to me, and with you I shall be content."

He drew her to him and kissed her with passionate tenderness. She returned his caresses with interest, clinging to him with a simple faith and love that touched him keenly.

He had wounded her most cruelly, he had sent her lover from her, blighted her young life, overwhelmed her with an agony of sorrow and shame of which he did not dream, but, in spite of all, her childlike love and reverence for him had not once wavered, nor had she even once doubted his affection for her.

"My poor child," he said, remorsefully. "I would that I could have spared you not only your great sorrow, but the knowledge I have been compelled to impart to you. I have refused to see you these three days, because I felt that the sight of you would stab me with a keener anguish, but I now see that you would have strengthened and comforted me. You can sleep peacefully to-night. Some one shall watch, lest Spiridion attack us. And now good night."

He led her along the wide, dusky hall to the door of her chamber, and again kissed and blessed her.

Then he shut up the house carefully, securing every door and window, and retired to his own room.

"Spiridion means mischief," he muttered. "We must move immediately. But where can we go? What country is without an extradition with England? Where shall I be safe? It is as well perhaps that we are compelled to go. When Lord Kingscourt returns he must not find us here. Alex and he must never meet again."

He took out a collection of maps, spreading them upon a table, and pored over them with weary eyes.

The morning found him haggard and worn, thin and pale, aweary of movement, but full of energy and resolution.

He presented himself at the breakfast-table at the usual hour. After the meal, leaving Alex to discuss with old Saba certain housekeeping questions, he called together several servants whom he could trust and informed them that he was about to visit Athens, and that he should be absent from home some time.

"My daughter will go with me," he announced, "and we shall sail in my yacht, which lies in the bay ready for the voyage. I want you to take down to her stores of provisions, and some of my effects that I prize above others. Let your movements be as secret and quiet as possible, for Spiridion may have out scouts to watch us."

The men transported the provisions to the yacht in a single trip. There were two or three trunks to be taken on board, but, lest an unfriendly spy-glass should be turned upon them, their removal was deferred until early evening.

The men were then dismissed to their tasks near the house, and Mr. Strange summoned his daughter to a conference in the library.

"We shall leave this place this evening, Alex," he said sorrowfully. "We shall take no servants with us except the men who will manage the yacht. Have your household linen, your little portable desk, and whatever you prize that can be easily carried, packed in trunks or boxes to-day."

Alex looked startled and dismayed.

"Where are we going, papa?" she asked.

"We shall sail to the Piræus; then journey by rail to Athens. There I shall sell to my Greek factor my yacht and the produce loaded in her. You know she has been loaded during the past few days for market. From Athens we shall go—I don't yet know where!"

Both father and daughter were very busy throughout the day, and soon after nightfall, in the darkness preceding the moon rising, the trunks were taken on board also, and preparations were made for a prompt departure.

Mr. Strange and Alex bade adieu to their dependents and left the house. In the garden they paused and looked back. The sky was overcast; a heavy gloom overspread gulf and glen and mountains.

"This is the hour Spiridion would choose for an attack," said the recluse. "We shall get away none too soon for our own safety. We must be far out upon the Gulf before the moon rises. Hark! What is that?"

He listened a moment, hearing only the sighing of the wind among the cypresses. Drawing his daughter's arm in his, he led her out of the garden, across the lawn, in the direction of the sea. Neither spoke. To both it seemed that they were being driven forth into exile by a pitiless fate. Alex thought of her lover and his promise to return.

He might come back, but she would not be there to receive him. She would never see his face again, never hear his voice. The spot that had been hallowed by his presence—the spot where all her life had been passed—seemed to her, at this moment, the choicest spot on all the globe.

"It is like the going out of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden," she sighed. "Oh, papa——"

"Hush!"

They were entering the olive grove. A sound of muffled trampling was heard close at hand. Mr. Strange drew Alex close behind the trunk of a tree, and they waited and listened breathlessly.

The trampling was that of a score of men moving cautiously in the direction of the house. They had passed the fugitives when, suddenly, the voice of Spiridion was heard, saying, in a low, penetrating tone:

"We shall take them completely by surprise. Those heavy clouds create a darkness very favourable to our purpose. Before the moon becomes visible we shall be well on our way to our mountain fastness with the girl. The priest has been captured, and is waiting. Before my young lady sleeps she will be my wife. Thus do I lay my plans in triumph."

Mr. Strange drew his daughter closer to his breast, holding her in a strong, firm, reassuring clasp until the bandits had passed on.

Then, without a word, he hurried her down to the beach.

A small boat and rowers were in waiting. They embarked, and were conveyed to the "Clytie," the small yacht which lay at anchor at a little distance from the shore.

A faint gleam of light through the gloom revealed the position of the vessel.

Alex was helped on board, her father followed her, and the small boat was raised to the deck.

The men proceeded to hoist sail, and to take up the anchor, a subdued excitement pervading them.

Mr. Strange groped about for a seat, and placed Alex upon it.

Father and daughter then turned their eyes shoreward, straining them for a last glimpse of the dear old home.

The yacht was fairly under way, bounding forward under the impulse of the breeze, when the last glimpse of home was afforded the fugitives in a manner they had not looked for. A sudden lurid blaze lit up the black southern sky; their home was in flames!

There were figures moving in the red light like demons at infernal work.

"Our dear old home," sighed Alex.

"I had hoped to sell the estate in Athens," said her father. "But those scoundrels, once they have entered upon their work of destruction, will not pause until the vineyards and groves are laid waste."

The yacht bounded on before the wind, and Alex, when the red glare of her ruined home had been lost to sight, descended to the small cabin and nestled upon a divan.

She did not sleep that night, listening to the steady tread of her father as he walked the deck, to the hoarse cries of the sailors, to the creaking of the cordage, and thinking of her lover, who now seemed doubly lost to her, since he could not know her future refuge.

When morning broke the yacht came to anchor at the Piræus. Mr. Strange took his daughter ashore, leaving her at an inn while he attended to the transfer of his trunks.

Then, taking Alex again in charge, he proceeded to the railway station, arriving in time to secure a first-class compartment in an early train.

Upon arriving at Athens they proceeded to a small but well-kept Greek hotel, at which no foreigners ever stopped. Here they registered as Mr. Stasso and daughter.

"Have you decided yet where we shall go?" asked Alex.

"Not yet. The whole wide world is before us, but I have not chosen one single spot for our refuge. I have thought of an oasis in the desert, of an islet in the Pacific Ocean, of a dwelling on the Russian steppes, of any retreat far remote from humankind. Am I selfish, Alex, in thus secluding you?"

"Oh, no, papa. I have never known any one but you and Lord Kingscourt. I am not used to society, so I cannot care for it."

"If I seem hard, my child, I am really merciful. Trust me always."

"I do—I do. But, papa," said Alex, with tender courage, "it grieves me to see you bear your burdens alone. Can you not lay a portion of them on my shoulders?"

Mr. Strange arose and walked to the window. A yearning came upon him to tell his story to his child.

He longed for her sympathy and tenderness; they would be balm to this unhealed wound he had borne so bravely many years.

"I am tempted to tell you, Alex. Since Lord Kingscourt left us I have more than once longed to tell you all the truth, that you might know me to be just and merciful. I have longed, as longs a sick child, to visit my own country. I have yearned for the damp and the fogs even of dear old England. I would gladly die if I might first revisit the scenes I loved."

"Can we not go, papa? I, too, long to visit England," cried Alex, with enthusiasm. "Would we not be safe in London? Dear papa, I have read that London is a vast wilderness. Would we not be more hidden there than in the desert or on the steppes?"

The colour drifted into Mr. Strange's cheeks. His eyes brightened with the keenness of his longing.

"I must have changed in eighteen years," he mused. "Who would recognise me now that knew me then? But it is impossible. I should not dare. We cannot go. Alex, an impulse comes over me to tell you the story of our blight. If the knowledge proves a sorrow grievous to bear, you must not blame me. Will you hear it?"

Alex assented, with a solemnity equal to his own.

"Lock the door!" he said, briefly.

Alex locked the door.

"Turn down the light," said her father, gently.

The light was turned down to a sort of twilight.

"Turn away your face," said Mr. Strange, in a hollow, broken voice. "Do not look at me, dear. I cannot bear to meet your gaze until my story is finished. Heaven grant it may meet me then, sweet and loving as ever. Are you ready?"

"Yes, papa," was the whispered response.

"I will tell you the whole story of the blight that rests upon you and upon me. I will tell you why you are a social pariah—an outcast whom the poorest beggar in England would scorn. Listen!"

CHAPTER X.

In the dim light, with the door locked, with every adjunct to secrecy in practice, Alex Strange, her soul wrought up to an intensity of suspense and anxiety, waited to hear the secret of that appalling mystery that had wrecked her father's life and blighted her own.

She bent forward in the gloom, a ray of light falling upon her beautiful young face, which shone pale and pure as a star; her sapphire eyes followed every movement of Mr. Strange.

"Papa," said Alex, her low, sweet voice thrilling the dusky stillness, "the ordeal is too hard for you. Do not try to tell me."

Her father's haggard eyes were turned towards her.

"You have a right to know," he said, firmly. "Heaven forgive me if I am laying too heavy a burden upon you, my poor child, but you should know why you are blighted and set apart from all others for your life long. I had thought never to tell you. I had hoped to be all in all to you always. I had dreamed that in the seclusion of our Grecian home, where for sixteen years no stranger ever came, you would lead a long and peaceful life, knowing nothing of love, or the passions that torture humanity. Yes, I expected that you would go through life, knowing nothing of love but that of your father; but fate has found us out. We cannot evade our destiny, and love has come to you even in that lonely mountain glen where we lived the life of hermits."

A groan was wrung from his white lips. He continued his unsteady walk.

"It is written," he continued, "that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children. We may say the misfortunes of the fathers also. The blight that rests upon your innocent head Alex, is that blight that, first of all, descended upon me. You are blighted through me."

"Papa!"

"I would have died to spare you what you have suffered already," said Mr. Strange, with a hopelessness more touching than a violent outbreak of despair. "If Lord Kingscourt had never come to Greece, we might be to-day happy and content in the only home you can remember. It is his coming that precipitated all these misfortunes upon us. Had you not been excited over the story of his sufferings and probable maiming at the hands of Spiridion, you would not have penetrated to the robbers' den; Spridion would not have obtained a hold upon you, his band would not have feared you, and violence would not have been offered you. We owe these recent troubles to the Earl of Kingscourt."

"He never meant to harm us, papa. He was the innocent and unconscious instrument of Providence."

Mr. Strange took another laggard turn across the room.

"Let me tell you my story before my courage fails," he said, desperately. "Eighteen years ago, Alex, all England rang with a tale of horror; society was convulsed to the very centre; the

newspapers were filled with it; it was whispered in drawing-rooms, discussed in bar rooms, talked over in the lowest slums; it thrilled all civilised Europe. It was a blood-curdling mystery of the day—the great Mountheron Tragedy!"

He spoke the final words in a strange whisper.

Alex sat silent, pale, and breathless.

"To this day the Mountheron Tragedy is remembered and discussed with awe," continued Mr. Strange, huskily. "Why, even Lord Kingscourt alluded to it on the morning of his departure from our home. It is rehearsed to the rising generation. Such horrors never die. It was a cause célèbre, and has its place in the criminal records of Great Britain as one of the most hideous crimes of the century. The history of the crime and the trial has been published in a yellow-covered volume, as one of a series of similar atrocities; it has been translated into the principal European languages; I have even seen allusions to it years ago in our Athens newspapers!"

"The Mountheron Tragedy!" repeated Alex, under her breath.

"Twenty-one years ago," said Mr. Strange, "one of the proudest families in Great Britain was that of the Mountherons. Its patent of nobility dated back for centuries. It was powerful, rich, and haughty. Its boast was that no stain of dishonour had ever smirched its lofty name. Its men had been brave in battle, wise in the counsels of the nation, high in the favour of the sovereign. Its women were proverbial for beauty, gentleness, sweetness, and purity. Yet that proud name was doomed to be covered with the frightful ignominy; an awful disaster humbled the pride of the Mountherons to the dust!"

Alex listened as if fascinated, and still was motionless as the dead, her burning sapphire eyes fixed in an unswerving gaze upon her father.

"The Marquis of Mountheron of that date, twenty-one years ago," said Mr. Strange, walking somewhat faster and speaking more hurriedly, "was a bachelor of nearly forty years of age, who was incurably lame.

"He was very sensitive upon the subject of his affliction, avoided society, and vowed never to marry. He had been betrothed in his youth to a lady who had jilted him for a straighter, handsomer lover, and he had never recovered from the hurt thus inflicted upon him.

"He had a brother sixteen years his junior—Lord Stratford Heron, to whom he had been a devoted guardian and friend. He declared his young brother to be the heir to his title and estates, as he should never marry, and the younger brother was everywhere regarded as the future Marquis of Mountheron.

"Upon the strength of his great prospects Lord Stratford Heron made a grand marriage with the daughter of a great duke—the Duke of Clyffebourne—a man whose pride matched that of the Mountherons, and even overtopped it—a man who would have considered suspicion to be dishonour, who would not have permitted his daughter to contract an alliance with royalty itself unless royalty was pure and spotless.

"The Lady Vivian Clyffe was a mere girl, beautiful, but cold as an icicle, and with her father's pride inbred in her. Her young husband adored her, and she—she certainly loved him. He took her home to Mount Heron, his ancestral seat, the home of his brother, who welcomed her with open arms, and established her as mistress of the castle, informing her that she would some day be mistress there by actual right, as the Marchioness of Mountheron.

"At Mount Heron, a year later, Lord Stratford Heron's only child, a girl, was born. There were great rejoicings upon the estates. The tenants made merry with ringing of bells, bonfires, and barbecues, for, if no male heir should come to oust this tiny girl, she would some day be Marchioness of Mountheron in her own right, the title and estates descending to the female branch in default of a male heir. The marquis, the misanthropic elder brother, rejoiced with the rest. He gave her her name of Constance, an old family name that had been borne by the eldest daughter of the house for centuries."

Mr. Strange's voice quavered. He paused again at the window for some minutes, and when he turned about, resuming his walk and his story, his features were stern and set, his blue eyes glowing with awakening fire.

"For two years Lord Stratford Heron and his young wife lived in a sort of Paradise. Their little child grew in beauty and intelligence. She was a tender little spirit, full of affectionate and winsome ways. Her parents worshipped her. Their sky was at its clearest and brightest, when, without warning, the thunderbolt fell.

"There had been a quarrel between the Marquis of Mountheron and the Duke of Clyffebourne upon some political question. Both were fiery and passionate, and the marquis cried out with an oath that the duke's grandchild should never rule at Mount Heron.

"For a month following that quarrel, the marquis was moody and irritable. He was much from home, and his manner to Lady Vivian became offensive and overbearing, so much so that her husband several times interfered to protect her, thereby incurring his elder brother's anger.

"One night—it was eighteen years ago—the marquis summoned Lord Stratford Heron and his young wife to a conference in the library. There were others present, invited to witness their humiliation. And then the marquis told the young couple that he was not satisfied that the succession to his title and estates should pass to a descendant of the Duke of Clyffebourne, and that he had decided to marry.

"He declared the preliminaries were settled, and the bride was ready. She was the younger daughter of an impoverished nobleman, and her father's greed and authority had compelled her to overlook the lack of love, the age, and deformity of her expectant bridegroom, in consideration of his lofty position and immense revenues.

"The wedding, the marquis announced, would take place upon the morrow.

"You know nothing of English life, Alex, except what you have gleaned from books, but you can imagine the shock this announcement caused to Lord and Lady Stratford Heron. They had been led to expect that they would succeed to the title and estates. To be thus summarily degraded, dismissed to the humble rank and portion of a younger son, for no good reason, merely to gratify a childish spite and revengefulness, was unutterably galling. If the marquis had chosen to marry for love, after all his declarations of an intention to remain single, the young couple could have borne their disappointment; but to be thus wronged through deliberate malice was more than they could bear.

"There was a stormy scene—and before those witnesses!

"Lord Stratford Heron entreated his brother to reconsider his decision, and the marquis mocked him. The wedding would take place on the next morning at eleven o'clock. There would be great rejoicings. The housekeeper, butler, and cook had been in his lordship's confidence, making ready for a week for the bride's home-coming, while the deposed heir had not even suspected the truth.

"The marquis sneered at Lady Stratford Heron, and bade her go home to her father. He said that he should require her rooms in the morning; he should bring his bride directly home; she had better be gone before his bride's arrival.

"His intolerable insolence provoked the young husband to fury. Lord Stratford Heron was impulsive and hot-headed. He said many violent things. I think he cursed his brother in his bitterness and anger.

"Then, drawing his young wife's arm in his, he led her from the room. At the door he paused, and cried out, with perhaps some mad notion of appealing to the expectant bride in his bewildered brain:

"You think you will bring home a bride to-morrow to rob me of the heritage you promised me? Heaven will not permit such injustice. You will never bring home a bride to Mount Heron! And for this intended wrong, which shall not be consummated, I swear to be revenged! Look to yourself, Marquis of Mountheron!'

"They were mad words, uttered in the heat of passion, but without sinister intent; I swear it to you, Alex! they were wild words, but not meant in wickedness or intended crime. Yet those listeners laid them up in their memories, to reproduce at a period when every syllable should be a nail head in their speaker's coffin!

"For that night James Marquis of Mountheron was most foully murdered in his bed!

"He was found by his valet at an early hour of the next morning, weltering in his blood. Lord Stratford Heron had spent the earlier portion of the night out of doors in the park, trying to cool his fevered blood in the fresh air. He let himself in at a private door, about two o'clock in the morning, and crept up to his own rooms, passing his brother's door. He halted at it a minute, with a half intention of awakening the marquis for a second interview. Changing his mind, he passed on, and as he moved away softly and silently, he was seen by the butler, who was on his way to a lower room, in search of toothache drops. Lord Stratford saw no one. He entered his room, and found his young wife awake, and greatly troubled about him. He fell asleep after long tossing on his pillow. When he awakened the next morning, and emerged from his room to descend to breakfast, he found himself in a policeman's grasp, and accused of his brother's murder!

"I need not dwell upon the horrors of that day, Alex. There was a coroner's inquest. The most convincing evidence was elicited against Lord Stratford Heron, and he was committed for trial to answer the charge of murder.

"Bail was refused, and he was lodged in the gaol of the nearest assize town. The Duke of Clyffebourne hastened to the support of his daughter. At the next assizes, which were close at hand, Lord Stratford was tried for his life.

"The evidence against him was overwhelming. He was told that his wife—even his wife—believed him to be guilty. He had been heard to utter threats of vengeance. The butler had seen him creep stealthily from the marquis's door at two in the morning. No one had seen him in the park. There was blood on his garments, and his account of how it came there was not believed. He had cut his hand in the night by an accident, and it had bled freely. The wound and the blood condemned him. There was further evidence against him, but I spare you its recital. A network of proof was established against him, and it was so strong that not one of all who had known him dared to believe in his innocence.

"I need not say that he fought desperately for his life. He employed the best counsel in the kingdom, and after hearing the proofs against him they abandoned his case. He employed others, but they were lukewarm, having no faith in him. He was even advised to plead guilty, in order to obtain a possible mitigation of punishment.

"The trial came to an end: Lord Stratford Heron, now legally Marquis of Mountheron, by a jury of his peers, was found guilty of his brother's murder. He was condemned to death—sentenced to be hanged.

"Weeks of blackness, of darkness, followed to that unhappy prisoner. His wife was not allowed by her father to visit him. But that she loved him still, in spite of his disgrace, he knew. Such love as theirs does not easily die. She proved her love and her pride at the last. The time for his execution drew near, his days were supposed to be numbered. The young wife, aided by her proud old father, found an agent to do her will. She bribed the gaoler, or his subordinate, with a small fortune, to bring about the prisoner's release.

"The matter was difficult, but gold can do wonders. Lord Stratford Heron effected his escape from prison. He was met outside by his wife's agent, who gave him a disguise, money, and a letter. The letter implored him to quit the country in all haste by a yacht which was waiting at the nearest seaport, and not to attempt to see his wife.

"The love of life is strong in us all. He could not bear that his daughter should grow up to hear that her father had been hanged for murder, although he was as innocent of it as an angel in Heaven. He fled to the seaport, boarded the yacht, and sailed to Portugal. Thence he went to Brazil. He was two years in South America. He engaged in business to occupy his mind, and quadrupled his capital.

"At length, torn with longing to see again his loved ones, he sailed for Portugal; he went to Paris. Here he procured a file of London newspapers for the two years of his exile. He read the story of his trial, of his escape. He read, also, that the Divorce Court had freed his young wife from her marriage bonds, and that she was no longer Lady Stratford Heron, but Lady Vivian Clyffe.

"The shock was terrible. He was ill for days afterwards. Later he read in a "Galigani" that the Duke of Clyffebourne, the Lady Vivian Clyffe, with the baby Marchioness of Mountheron, were stopping at their villa at Nice for the winter. The Lady Vivian's health, which had long given her friends cause for great alarm, demanding the soft air of a Southern climate. The exile took the next train for Nice.

"He easily discovered the Duke of Clyffebourne's villa. Years of suffering had changed him from the young man of fashion into a thin, gaunt, and sallow person, sunburnt, and unrecognisable by those who had once known him. He hung about the villa, watching for a glimpse of his dear one. He was lounging outside the iron gate, when out came the duke's barouche. The duke was in it, grey and grim, a man of iron, The Lady Vivian was there, too, clad in the deepest mourning, looking fragile, but cold and haughty as ever. And by her side was her little child, a fairy with long waving hair, and seraph's eyes, who tossed the watcher a flower in her baby glee. The child was four years old then. The exile watched the carriage out of sight, and then flung himself on the turf and cried as only a strong man can cry in his despair.

"After that he haunted the neighbourhood of the duke's villa. He saw guests come and go, many of them the Lady Vivian's suitors. He heard that she would soon be married. He heard, too, that a price was set upon his head, and that the police of every country were warned to look out for him and return him to his own Government. He dared not stay long at Nice. He was starving for his family. He made up his mind to go, and paid a last visit to the neighbourhood of the villa.

"Chance threw a strange temptation in his way. The iron gate was ajar. Within, upon the lawn, the nurse was coquetting with the gardener. The little baby marchioness, unwatched, had strayed out into the road. The father, with a wild impulse he could not resist, caught up the child, pressing her to his bosom, and ran swiftly down the road.

"Singularly enough, the little Augusta did not utter a cry. She was of a fearless nature, loving everybody. She had seen him often of late, and had thrown him flowers. She took the proceeding for one of frolic.

"He got away before an alarm was raised. He found a disguise for the child, and left in an hour for Italy. Thence, with an exercise of the greatest caution, he journeyed to Greece."

(*To be Continued.*)

GLORIA;

OR,

MARRIED IN RAGE.

CHAPTER LXV.

A PILE of white buildings slowly came into view as if they had risen up out of the sea.

"What place is this? I do not remember this place at all! No, I am sure I never saw it before! It was not here when I left. Is it a hotel? On whose place is it built? I did not know there was another island so near Sandy Isle as this must be!" questioned and exclaimed Miss Agrippina, as the boat drew towards a convenient little pier, with steps.

"It's werry hard, so it is, to please you, Miss Aggravater! 'Deed it's impossible to do it. It is so. Jes' now yer tol' me to hol' my tongue, an' if I opened my mouf ag'in, how you'd 'port me. Yer did so. An' now yer freaten to 'port me if I don't open my mouf! Yer do so. I am gwine to 'port you for one ob de onreasonablest, contradictoriest, aggravatinist ole 'omens as ebber I took ober de water—which I wish it was Ole Harry hisse'f as was a ferryin' yer ober de Ribber ob Styx, 'stead o' me!" exclaimed the irate old man, as he rose in the boat, drew in his oar, and using it as a pole, began to push it up to the side of the stairs.

Miss De Crespigney, who had never in her life received impertinence from any one, was perfectly dumbfounded with astonishment and indignation.

"I will have you discharged for this," she exclaimed, as soon as she found her voice.

The old man turned about to retort, but Gloria laid her hand on him and looked in his face.

"Werry well, young mist'ess, I'll keep the peace. I'll keep it for your sake—I will so. I'm a good Baptist brudder myse'f—I is so; but John de Baptist hisse'f—well, nebber mind, young mist'ess, I won't say no more. Here we is," concluded the old man, securing the boat to the steps, and offering his hand to assist the young lady to step out.

"What place is this? Why have you stopped here? Is anything wrong with the boat that requires attention?" demanded Miss De Crespigney of one of the oarsmen.

"No, mum, dere ain't nuffin wrong. Dis is Sandy Isle, where yer wanted to be tuk to," respectfully answered the man.

"Sandy Isle!" exclaimed the old lady, staring all over the scene.

Gloria also opened her eyes wide with wonder. She had been looking out for Sandy Isle all the way and had been landed on this place, like one in the maze of an incongruous dream from which she could not awake.

"Yes, mum," said the man, as he politely assisted Miss De Crespigney to step from the boat, "this is Sandy Isle, though I don't wonder as yer didn't know it again. No one would know it as had seen it a year ago and den not seen it ag'in till to-day," said the old man.

He was quite right—the place was indeed unrecognisable. In place of the little rough little sand hillock with its tiny cottage and garden and few sheds and stunted fruit-trees, here was a clean, compact little island, with a girdle of young shade trees encircling it, above water mark, with a little pier and steps leading up to a raised wooden walk, or plank path, that was a continuation of the pier landward, and running up to a large oblong, two-storied white stone house, with porches all around it before both stories.

On each side the plank path were rows of young silver maple trees, planted regularly, that would in a few years make a delightful shade. Plank paths intersected the ground, running down some to little, white bathing-houses on the beach, and some to little, lattice work, white-washed arbours, around which young climbing vines had been planted that would in time make them delightful with shade, bloom and fragrance.

"What is the meaning of this change?" demanded Miss De Crespigney, as she followed Gloria and the old flagman up the plank road.

But at the moment she asked the question, she noticed Gloria in front totter and reel, as if she would have fallen.

The vigorous old lady darted forward and caught the half fainting girl and supported her for a few moments on her bosom.

"Oh, aunt, what is the meaning of this?" murmured Gloria, in a fainting voice, as she leaned rather heavily on the old lady's shoulder.

"My dear, let us go on to the house and learn there. The little Island has probably changed hands. The young fisherman has likely sold it for a summer bathing resort, or something of the sort," said Miss De Crespigney, soothingly, as she hunted in her pocket and found her bottle of sal ammonia and held it open to Gloria's nostrils.

"And left the neighbourhood, I fear—I fear," breathed Gloria.

"Now lean on me and try to walk on, my dear. We shall soon reach the house and hear all about it," said Miss De Crespigney, all the more kindly because she was secretly hoping what Gloria was fearing—that David Lindsay had departed "for parts unknown."

"It looks very quiet and even solitary up there. Not like a hotel," murmured Gloria, as she inhaled the sal ammonia and felt revived by it.

"This is not the season, you know, for visitors, but I daresay we shall find someone there in charge," said Miss De Crespigney, as she led her failing companion up on the front porch and made her sit down on the rustic arm-chair, while she herself rang the bell.

The door was opened by a venerable man in a long black frock coat encasing his tall, meagre form from throat to feet, and a small, round, black skull-cap covering his head, which was bald down to the rim of the cap, beneath which a fringe of scant grey hair hung like a thin silver fringe.

"Father Moriarty!" exclaimed both ladies in a breath, as they recognised the good old man.

"Oh, Father Moriarty, I am so glad to see you! You can tell me all I want to know. Where is David Lindsay? How is he?" inquired Gloria eagerly, breathlessly.

"He is well. Come in, my child. You can scarcely stand. Take my arm. Miss De Crespigney, I am glad to see you. Pray walk in," said the old man, as he supported Gloria into a broad hall with a clean floor and clean white walls.

He placed her in an arm-chair, set another for Miss De Crespigney, and then hurried into the next room and brought a small glass of spirits of lavender, mixed with sugar and water, which he made Gloria drink.

But the old flagman had followed the party into the hall, and now he stood, hat in hand, before Miss De Crespigney, saying, with mocking humility:

"Dere, mum, dere's my ole marster; now yer can 'port me for my bad behavement."

"What, what, what has old John been doing, Miss De Crespigney?" inquired the aged priest, with a smile that showed he was not expecting to hear of any very flagrant delinquency.

"It is of no consequence now, Father Moriarty. What I most wish to know is the meaning of all this that we see around us, and which is a complete surprise," said the old lady.

"And; oh, sir, is David Lindsay here?" inquired Gloria, in low, pleading tones,

"Not here, my child, but he is well and doing well. I will tell you all about him presently. Miss De Crespigney, you ask about these changes."

"I beg pardon for interrupting you, dear Father Moriarty; but Mrs. Lindsay—is she well? Can I see her?" pleaded Gloria.

"My child, is it possible that you have not heard—that you do not know?"

"Oh, sir, I have heard nothing—I know nothing. All that I find here fills me with astonishment and wonder. Tell me about my friends."

"My child, the good Dame Lindsay has been in Heaven these months. She passed away about a year ago, without any previous illness, quietly, painlessly, as a child falls to sleep."

"Oh, no, no, no! Don't say that. Oh, how cruel. Oh, my dear, dear old friend. My dear old friend, whose age I did so hope to comfort and brighten," cried Gloria, struck to the heart with grief.

"My good child, be consoled in the thought that she has more—infinitely more comfort and brightness in her renewed youth and in her Father's house than we could ever bestow upon her age here," said the good man, earnestly.

But the girl's natural sorrow would find its vent in a passion of tears and sobs as she leaned on the shoulder of Miss De Crespigney.

"Let her have her 'cry' out. It will do her good. And now tell me about these changes,"

said the old lady, as she tenderly supported her weeping charge.

"It can all be told in a few words. David Lindsay found the pirates' money that has been hidden for nearly two centuries. Unlike any other man that I ever heard of, he believed that he had no right to this hidden treasure that had lain unclaimed on his land for so many years; and, as it had been won by crimes against humanity, he determined to devote it to charities for the benefit of humanity. One of these charities is this asylum, which serves the double purpose of a winter shelter for the homeless poor, and a summer hospital for destitute infants and children. We had the house full of little sufferers from the cities and their poor mothers last season, and they nearly all got well in the pure air and with the sea-bathing. Even those few who were beyond recovery passed away in more ease and comfort than they could have had in their poor homes in the crowded city."

"But how did the children get here?"

"By steamboat, chartered twice a week to bring them."

"And all this is paid for out of David Lindsay's pocket?"

"Out of the pirates' money, a portion of which he has appropriated to this purpose. And also several wealthy men and women of the cities have come forward to charter the boats to send the destitute sick children down here."

"Where is this young man, this David Lindsay, now?"

"He has gone to America."

Gloria, whose sobs had gradually ceased as she listened to the story of David Lindsay's magnanimity, now started up on hearing of his departure for the new world.

"'Gone to America!'" she echoed, in dismay.

"Yes, my child, he took passage in the "Albatross," which sailed yesterday from Liverpool for New York."

"Oh, what fatality! Oh, what fatality! Oh, how could he have missed all my letters! One might have miscarried; perhaps even two; but three?—Oh, Father Moriarty, are you sure, very sure that he got neither of them?" inquired Gloria, wringing her hands.

"I am positive, I am in the young man's full confidence, my child. I know, as no other man does, how long and trying this last year has been to him; how impatiently he waited for the first of February to come; how on the first mail-day of the month he hurried to St. Inigoes to get the letter he hoped to find there——"

"And which he should have found there! Oh, Heavens, what fatality!" interrupted Gloria.

"Well, my child, he went to St. Inigoes every mail-day during the whole month of February, in the hope of getting a letter—a hope that grew fainter and fainter as the month drew to a close, while he himself lost appetite and sleep, health and strength, until from a fine and a vigorous looking young fellow he looked like a man falling into a consumption. On the last of the month he gave up all hope, and sailed yesterday."

"Oh, the fatality!" again groaned Gloria, wringing her hands. "On what day did he leave here, Father?"

"On Saturday last, giving himself only time to reach Liverpool and go on board the steamer before she should sail for New York."

"Oh, Aunt Agrippina," wailed Gloria, "if I had only come down a week ago instead of writing, all this might have been prevented. But I think he was too hasty. Oh, I do think he was too hasty. If he did not get a letter from me he might have made allowance for accidents; he might even have written to me, or come to see me before going so far away."

"I suggested that course to him; but he told me that his honour was pledged not to seek you either by writing or visiting, until you yourself should recall him. Besides, he said that he would not practice on your sympathies, or on your generosity. He would owe your hand to your love. He took all the newspapers containing the society news for the sake of seeing your name in the list of those appearing at the receptions, balls, &c., of the season. He supposed that you were leading a gay and congenial life in the city, and that you wished to forget him. In that supposition he went abroad, an almost broken-hearted man."

"Do not weep so, child. Believe me it is all for the best," said Miss De Crespigney, who, being very well satisfied with the turn affairs had taken, was well qualified to declare—"All for the best."

(To be Continued.)

A TREE THAT RAINS.

The Consul of the United States of Columbia in the Department of Loreto, Peru, has recently called the attention of President Prado to a remarkable tree which exists in the forests adjoining the village of Moyobamba. This tree, known to the natives as Tamai-Caspi (rain tree), is about 58 feet in height at full growth, and the diameter of its trunk is about 39 inches. It absorbs and condenses the moisture in the atmosphere with astonishing energy, and it is said that water constantly exudes from its trunk and falls like rain from its branches. So abundant is the water supply that the soil near by is turned into a marsh. The tree gives forth most water when the rivers are dry during the summer season, and when water generally is scarce. Its cultivation is proposed throughout the arid regions of Peru.

THE SUN AND THE MILK-CAN.

According to the "Canada Farmer," David Long, of Aurora, Ill, who carries milk to the cheese factory, had his milk-can turned bottom up on a table near the kitchen door to be purified by the sun. This was the usual place of sunning the milk-can. One day, about noon, Mrs. Long discovered the smell of burning wood, and called the attention of Mr. Long to it. After some search he found the window blind above the can on fire. A hole had already been burned through, and as the blind was open, the fire was about to burn into the weather boards of the house. Had the family been from home, no doubt the house would have been burned. The fire was caused by the hollow, bright bottom of the milk-can forming a concave reflector, which gathered the parallel rays of the sun into a focus with sufficient power to set fire to wood.

AN UNNATURAL MARRIAGE.

It was a fine day in the summer of 1874.

A group of fashionables occupied the settees on a piazza watching the steamer disgorge her passengers.

Yorke Westerly and Paul Berthold strolled down smoking their cigars, and chatting gaily.

"I do hope we shall be favoured with some new face to-day," remarked Berthold, "for positively I am sick of the never-varying smiles of the Lamsons, and Bell Stanhope is absolutely a bore with her 'Yes, sirs,' and 'No, sirs.' It would be a relief to have some one to quarrel with."

"Too hot," said Westerly, shading his eyes.

"Heavens! What a foot! Jove! Westerly! only look at her."

"Who? what?—if I may ask."

"There—the small figure in black. What a becoming hat! I'll wager a box of gloves her hair is her own. She's in black, but I hope she isn't a widow. They are dangerous creatures generally."

Westerly followed the glance of his friend, and saw a fair, slight woman standing alone, waiting for her baggage to be put on the waggon.

She wore black throughout; her face was a little flushed, for she knew people were looking at her.

Her hair and eyes were dark brown, her features clearly cut, and the lines and curves around her mouth and chin inexpressibly sweet and tender.

Berthold gazed upon her in a sort of helpless fascination, and was totally unconscious of his rudeness until Westerly drew him away.

Her name was written on the hotel register in fair well-cut letters—Helen Byrne. Nothing more.

Miss Byrne had dined on board, and did not come down till tea-time.

Then she wore a plain white muslin dotted with black.

Berthold sat opposite her, and made an attempt to eat.

But he failed signally. He salted his tea, and put sugar on his toast, and upset the cream on Miss Stanhope's pink dress.

Miss Byrne went immediately to her room. Three days passed.

In spite of Berthold's varied attempts he had not succeeded in exchanging a single word with this woman whom he so passionately admired. She held aloof from all.

But Berthold's good fairy was at work for him, and one day the long-wished for opportunity occurred.

He was out for a couple of hours fishing in one of the many trout brooks which abounded the hotel, and while idly lying beneath a tree looking up to the placid sky, he heard a step, and he felt rather than saw that Miss Byrne was near.

She was coming down the opposite bank—her hat in her hand—a wreath of cardinal flowers hanging their crimson glory over her black dress.

The stream was spanned by a moss-grown log, washed by the water, and at the best but a very insecure foothold.

Miss Byrne came on decidedly, stepped upon the traitorous bridge—it turned—and she was precipitated into the stream.

The water was deep at that point, but in falling she had caught at the branch of an overhanging tree, and saved herself from total immersion, but her position, though not exactly dangerous, was at least unpleasant enough.

Berthold rushed down the bank, and into the stream, and brought her to the shore.

"Thank you. I was awkward. I am afraid I have put you to some inconvenience," glancing at his wet clothing.

"You have given me a great pleasure, Miss Byrne, the pleasure of your acquaintance, for I shall claim that. Will you admit that claim?"

He had taken her hand, and was regarding her with his soul in his eyes.

"I did not come here to make acquaintances. And I do not know your name," she said.

"My name is Paul Berthold. I am an artist. Make me happy by assuring me that we shall be friends."

"Excuse me. It is a solemn thing to promise a real friendship."

"But I may speak to you, may I not?" he asked, eagerly.

"Yes," she said, "you may speak to me, and now I will go up to the house. It is getting chilly."

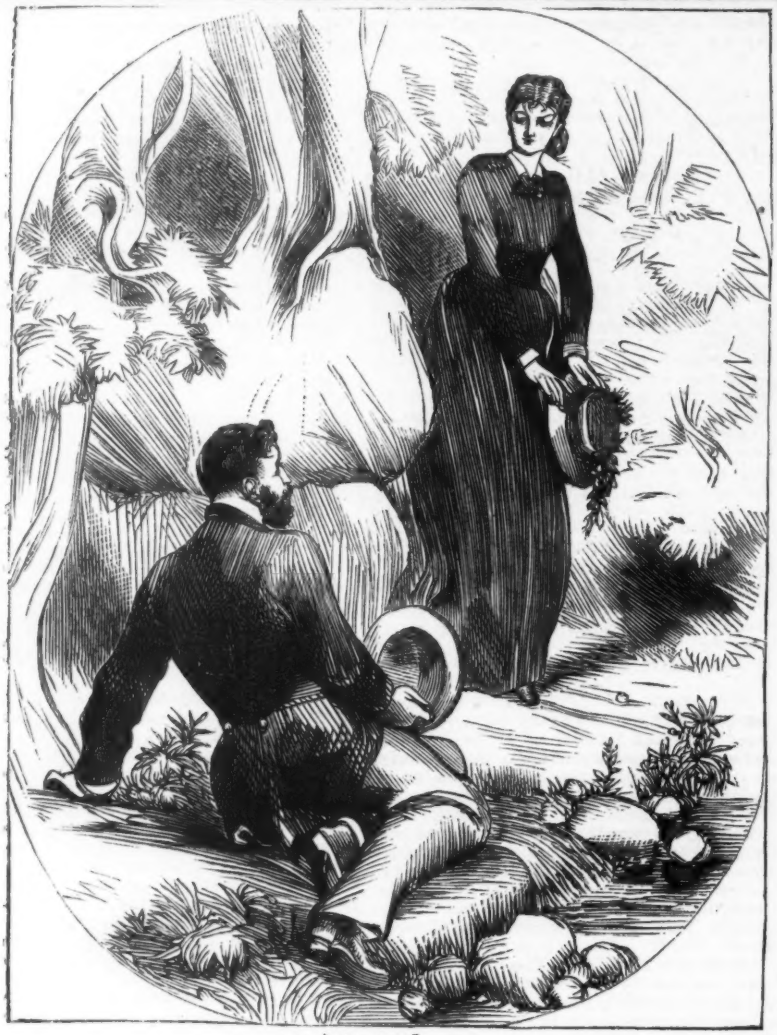
"Pardon me. I had forgotten your bath."

This was the beginning of their acquaintance, and Berthold lost no time in following it up. He brought her flowers and books, and in a thousand ways made her lonesome life more bright and cheerful.

People began to talk; Paul Berthold, wealthy, aristocratic and handsome, had for years been the special object of managing mothers and manœuvring daughters, and now to see him appropriated by a mere little nobody was mortifying in the extreme.

Mrs. Berthold, his haughty lady mother, arrived in August, and though she was horrified at the condition of things, she was too wise to intimate anything of the kind to Paul.

From the very first the guests were sure there was something suspicious about Helen Bryne, and time confirmed them in their belief. She received long letters posted at an obscure town, and after their reception she was invariably sad, and her face sometimes bore traces of weeping. 'Besides, she had more than once been seen near



[HIS FATE.]

midnight, wrapped in a heavy shawl, and hurrying along, evidently fearful of being observed.

Yorke Westerly meanwhile looked on silently; no one knew what he thought, for he was not given to much conversation. Two hard years' service in the army had injured his health, and a wound in the shoulder had procured him a three months' furlough which he was now enjoying.

One day the mail brought Helen Bryne a letter. Westerly handed it to her. Her hand trembled as she took it, she grew very pale, and went immediately to her room.

Berthold wandered about the garden disconsolately, and Westerly went down to the lake side.

Partially screened beneath an old boat-house, Yorke Westerly sat and watched the progress of the storm. By-and-bye he heard voices; one was a woman's; he could not mistake those clear, silvery tones.

"Go, no—I must return to the house."

The low, deep tones of a man replied, and through the gloom Westerly distinctly saw a tall figure leap down the bank and into a boat, and the next moment something dark and wet swept by him. He put out his hand and stayed its course. The face of Helen Bryne gleamed white as marble through the mist.

"Miss Byrne!" he exclaimed, "is it possible?"

"Hush!" she said, under her breath; "and unloose my arm. It is late, and I wish to go in."

"Yes; but you cannot go in without passing through the company. They are all on the piazza watching the storm."

She clasped her hands slowly, with something like despair in the gesture.

"May I help you," he asked, obeying a sudden impulse; "I promise you to be faithful and true, and silent as the tomb, always."

She regarded him steadily, the swift flashes of lightning showing her the dark, powerful face with the great, steadfast grey eyes bent upon her. She put out her hand and touched his.

"I need a friend here, and I will take you."

"Thank you; and now allow me to conduct you to the house; you and I have been out walking, and were caught in the shower."

They went up the broad, gravelled walk together, in full view of a large portion of those who had assembled on the piazza.

Berthold stepped quickly forward when he perceived them, a shade of annoyance darkened his fine face.

"Indeed, Westerly, I did not know that you were so sentimentally inclined as to prefer the open air in a thunderstorm."

"Nor do I. But necessity has no choice. We were caught in the rain, but I thought of the old boat-house. It afforded us a partial shelter. I am afraid Miss Byrne had the worst of it."

Berthold bent over her.

"I shall be troubled about you," he said, almost tenderly—"you will get dry clothes at once, will you not?"

"Certainly," she said, more gently than was her wont—"I am not partial to the water cure. Good-night, gentlemen," and she hurried off up the hall stairs.

The next day there was a picnic at Red Hill.

Miss Byrne found herself mounted on a spirited horse with Berthold at her bridle-rein.

All day he haunted her like a shadow. She tried her best to freeze him away, but the colder she was the more devoted he grew.

It was almost sunset before they set out to return.

Suddenly a large white hawk flew down the path before their horses, and Helen's horse shied—turning from the beaten path—and rushed wildly off through the tangled underwood.

Berthold followed at the top of his animal's speed, and caught her bridle just as her alarmed beast was about to plunge down a ledge which overhung a deep ravine.

He lifted Helen from the saddle—all his passion glowing red in his face, and before he was aware, it leaped from his lips.

"Thank Heaven! you are safe! And I love you, Helen! Heaven only knows how madly! What can you say to me?"

She was very pale, and spoke with an effort.

"I cannot listen to you. Let us hasten to rejoin the company."

He put his arm around her, but she shrank from his touch.

"Oh, Helen! he cried—"you do not, cannot mean to repulse me!"

"Mr. Berthold—" she said quietly—and her voice seemed to congeal as it fell on the air—"it is a crime for you to speak to me thus—and it is criminal for me to listen. A gulf as impassable as the seas of Eternity separates us! And even were it not for that, I could not answer otherwise, for I do not love you!"

"Oh, unsay those words, Helen! I do not ask you to love me now! I will wait until I can teach you to love me! Only give me a little hope to cling to."

"I can give you nothing. I am grateful to you, but I do not wish to deceive you. I do not—and I never shall love you! And let this subject never again be alluded to between us!"

A week after Westerly was out gunning, He spent most of his time in the woods now.

The half-dozen fashionable young ladies of his set who had come to the house simply because Captain Westerly had chosen to spend his furlough there, were in despair; they had smiled and coquetted, and played the agreeable in vain—Westerly was invulnerable.

This afternoon his luck had been poor. He had seen nothing whatever worth the powder, and just as he was turning homeward a robin flew past him, and perched on a little tree. Some cruel impulse made him raise his rifle and fire.

The bird flew away unharmed, but as Westerly started forward Helen Byrne emerged from the thicket, her light coloured robed covered with her own blood, which was flowing profusely from a ghastly wound in her arm.

Westerly grew cold with apprehension. She smiled faintly up in the horror-stricken face bending over her.

"You promised to be my friend once," she said, "and now I have something to remember you by."

"Good Heavens!" he cried, "what have I done? Miss Byrne, I feel like a villain. In what words dare I ask your forgiveness?"

"It is granted you freely on the condition that you never shoot another harmless bird again. It is cruel, may I not say unmanly?"

"I admit it. And I promise. The birds hereafter are safe."

She turned into a by-path, and terminated the interview.

Westerly picked up his rifle. He was thinking intently. In a manner reviewing his own life. He was thirty years of age, and as yet he had never an emotion for any woman stronger than admiration. He wondered at it greatly. He was not heartless—he knew that well enough—but the image of no woman occupied his heart. Mother and sisters had died while he was a mere boy, and his father had been taken from him in his early youth. He knew nothing of the delights of home and its loves. He had not

suffered for attention, but he knew that it was paid him mainly on account of his wealth, and he treated it accordingly.

But now within a few days, he had grown unaccountably restless—nothing pleased him; he wearied of exertion, and he wearied of idleness. Paul Berthold had laughingly suggested that he was in love—and Westerly had joined in the laugh.

But now he felt as if Paul had not been far from right. Miss Stanhope met him on the piazza.

"Oh! Captain Westerly! such a strange thing has happened, there are two military-looking men here inquiring for Helen Bryne, and conversing in very low tones with the landlord."

Westerly followed the glance of his companion. Helen was approaching the house slowly, and with apparent effort.

She did look pale, there was almost an expression of pain on her face. Westerly hurried down to meet her, but had hardly spoken a half-dozen words to her, when the hand of a tall man was laid on her shoulder.

"Madame," said the new comer, "it is my unpleasant duty to arrest you. Mrs. Helen Fairfax, you are charged with being a spy. Since August last, you have been a bird of passage. Your husband is a colonel. Why you have selected this retired and out-of-the-way place I cannot determine. You know best. But certain it is, that since your stay here, you have several times been seen in close communication with an outlaw. Papers have passed between you, and it is plainly evident that he has brought you tidings, and received your communications in return. In your room a letter has been found, which is in itself sufficient to convict you."

Helen looked at Westerly. He still stood close beside her—his dark, searching eyes resting on her face.

Berthold, first red, and then pale, stood a little removed, and behind him, flushed and triumphant, his mother and a half dozen other ladies.

"What have you to say?" said the officer.

"Nothing."

"You are here known as Helen Bryne. Do you deny that you are the wife of Edward Fairfax?"

"No."

"How, then, do you explain being here under an alias?"

"My name is Helen Bryne Fairfax. I judged it best to drop the last name."

"Why? may I ask."

She smiled scornfully, but kept silent.

Westerly spoke a few words aside with Colonel Beale.

"Certainly, if you wish it, Captain Westerly."

Helen was allowed to go to her room—a guard was set at the door—and the company adjourned to the drawing-room to talk it over.

Westerly took a sail, and did not come in until midnight. Berthold sat in one corner of the room painfully distrait—mortified, but flattering himself that no one had observed his partiality for this Mrs. Fairfax.

Mrs. Berthold watched him with a self-satisfied air; well pleased with herself for the part she had taken in causing Mrs. Fairfax's arrest—although she had been obliged to demean herself by peeping into trunks and drawers, and reading private papers.

The next morning, when Colonel Beale and his prisoner departed, every one was anxious to see how she would bear it.

And she was calm and pale as she came down, leaning on the arm of Sergeant Thomas.

In the lower hall, Yorke Westerly came forward.

"I will relieve you of your charge, if you please, sergeant" he said, drawing the hand of Helen within his arm.

She looked up at him with surprise.

"You will not be offended at the liberty I have taken, Mrs. Fairfax? I am going to-day to rejoin my regiment, and shall have the pleasure of attending you."

"I am very glad," she said, simply.

"I promised once to be your friend, you know," he said, in a subdued voice.

They met Berthold. Helen looked at him, half put out her hand, but he hesitated, reddened, and turned away.

"A summer friend," she said, almost sadly, "but then he is not to blame."

On the boat Mrs. Fairfax said to Westerly:

"Your kindness to me demands my confidence. Shall I tell you all my story?"

"No," he replied, "not now. I will not listen to it until you are free from this absurd charge. For I am sure you will be free. They can prove nothing against you. And I have perfect confidence in your loyalty."

"Thank you."

Owing to the influence of Westerly, it was only two days before Helen was brought before the proper authorities to answer to the charge made against her. The examination was very brief. Nothing could be proved against her, and after a little while she was dismissed.

Captain Westerly had not forsaken her. He had been near through it all, and when she was acquitted he said to her:

"Now, Mrs. Fairfax, I am ready to listen to your story. I do not ask your confidence through idle curiosity, but because my understanding your situation fully, I may be better able to serve you."

"You are right. I shall tell you my little history with pleasure. My father was a wealthy merchant—I was his only child. We lived in style. The estate of Mr. Fairfax adjoined ours. Edward was his eldest son. He was six years my senior. A youth of arrogant, haughty disposition, cruel in the extreme.

"When I was seven years of age Mrs. Fairfax and my father had entered into a solemn compact of betrothal between their children. All through my childhood and early youth I had a strong, unconquerable dislike for Edward Fairfax. And he seemed to take special pains in turning my dislike into positive hatred. He tormented me continually. He seemed to be jealous of everything that I loved, and I remember once that he tore a blue tissue dress I had, because I said I liked it better than anything I had ever seen. Of course this system did not win my love, and as I grew older, I felt for my intended husband nothing but the bitterest hatred.

"At fourteen I was sent to finish my education. I was just the age when impressions are most readily received and retained. True, I did not see things in those days with the clearness with which I see them now.

"Edward Fairfax had just arrived home from college, and though the boy's coarseness was obscured by the man's polish, I saw that the inner nature remained unchanged.

"He was handsome, accomplished—perhaps talented—but he was the same, cold, cynical Lucifer as of old, and his disposition was so dominant and positive that I never could meet him without an involuntary shudder of dread. In a few weeks I fairly loathed him.

"If left alone with him I dreaded him as I would a hyena. I kept my own maid, Altha, constantly with me, lest I might be left alone with Edward. One day he asked me to ride. On this occasion I answered him as usual. I did not wish to go. I saw his dark cheek flush slowly. He handed me into the carriage and we set off without a word. He urged the horses on at their utmost speed, and we were soon whirling along the shores of the river.

"We came at last to a private way—a green lane leading down to the lake, the gate to which was closed. A boy leaned over the post, looking at us. Fairfax drew in his horses.

"'Open the gate, you imp!' he shouted to the boy, who drew himself up proudly.

"Oh, you are not my master," he replied.

"Fairfax grew dark with rage. He lifted his heavy whip and brought it down upon the boy's forehead with such force that he sunk to the ground. My blood boiled. I snatched the whip from his hand, and struck him with all my might. I think he carries the red scar on his cheek to this day. He wrenched the whip from me, with something like admiration blazing from his eyes. Then he pinioned me to his breast in a grasp like iron.

"'My little tigress. It will be rare sport to tame you.'

"A moment he held me thus, gloating over my helpless terror; then he alighted, threw open the gate, tossed the still inanimate body of the boy aside, and drove through. At the lake side he lifted me out and offered me his arm.

"'We will go up farther, if you please, Helen. The shore is bolder.'

"I repelled him by a gesture, and followed him sullenly. He led me to a high bluff, overlooking a rocky gulf half full of stagnant water and dead trees. He stepped to the extreme verge and peeped over.

"'A hundred feet, sheer descent,' he said, meditatively, 'a splended chance for one who wanted to put a period to his life. Come hither, Helen, and look down with me.'

"His face was positively demoniac as he turned it towards me. I clutched a willow shrub for support. He tore me away from it, dragged me to the brink of the precipice, and, seizing me in his arm, held me far out over the abyss. I would not scream, though I expected momentarily to be dashed to atoms.

"'Helen,' he said, speaking in a low tone of intense passion, 'in all your life you have never kissed me. Now, I am going to buy a caress of you. Kiss me, or I swear by Heaven I will let you drop!'

"My blood curdled, but I was decided. I feared him more than death.

"Do as you like,' I said, 'but I will never kiss you, never! I hate you as I never dreamed an hour ago of hating anyone.'

"You little imp! I might crush the life out of you in a moment, but I will not do it. I will crush you by degrees. You do not love me—you never will—but you are to marry me. And then I will be revenged, aye, revenged! You shall live to feel the power of Edward Fairfax when he is your husband.'

"He drew me back, and I sunk down on a rock behind me more dead than alive. He was silent all the way home. At the door of my father's house he said:

"It has been a jolly ride, Helen, hasn't it? Sometime we will repeat it.'

"But I must not linger so over details. I will pass the time swiftly until I was nineteen. On my nineteenth birthday my marriage was to be solemnised. As the time drew near I was filled with direful dread.

"Well, the tenth of November came. I thanked Heaven that the sun did not shine. The day was as grey as ashes and sackcloth.

"They dressed me in splendid robes which had been procured for the occasion: they put the orange blossoms in my hair, and clasped my arms with the pearls which were the gift of Mr. Fairfax, and which burnt me like serpents of fire.

"I listened to the voice of the clergyman—it seemed to come from a vast distance—but I had no power to make the responses. My voice failed me utterly. They took my silence for consent, and upheld by the iron arm of Fairfax I went through with the ceremony. When all was over, and he turned to salute me, I fell to the floor a dead weight, and it was weeks before I was again conscious of existence.

"They told me I had been very ill, and must lie quiet, without troubling myself to think. I looked around me vaguely. The place where I lay was new to me. It was not my own cheerful room at home. The hangings were dark purple, and I missed the shadow of the oleanders against the window. Athla, my faithful servant, divined the unspoken question I would have asked.

"Some months passed, during which I saw very little of my husband. At that time I almost blessed the war, because it freed me from his presence. In March he was more frequently at home. Those were terrible days to me. He would sit by my side, and with his arms around me, smother me in kisses so wild and fierce that the conviction grew upon me that I had wedded a maniac. At times his conduct savoured so strongly of insanity that I could hardly doubt but he was crazed. Now I know that it was the effect of the stimulants he constantly indulged in.

"But from this moment my resolve was taken. I would flee from my father, from everything, but to be free from that inhuman fiend. On the departure of my husband with his regiment, he said to me:

"'Helen, think of it as you will, but in my own wild fashion I love you. No other woman could ever influence me as you have done. You will remain here and await my return. I have not yet had all the vengeance I will have upon you for refusing to give me your heart. And do not think of fleeing from me, for I warn you I will move heaven and earth to have you back.'

"As soon as he was gone I fled. I remained away six months, and once I heard from home through Japhet Stone. My father was dead; Colonel Fairfax was still in the army, but he had set pursuers on my track, and I might expect to be seized at any time. The threats of Stone to expose my whereabouts to my husband had the desired effect, and I gave him all the ready money I had.

"He wrote the letters which I received, and which depressed me so much that everyone noticed it. He it was with whom you saw me that night by the lake, and he it was who, when he found I had no more money to give him, for a small consideration exposed me to Mrs. Berthold, representing me as a spy, and owing to her influence I was arrested. There, that is the whole story.

"You wonder, perhaps, that I have kept my private circumstances so secret; but I dared not breathe my history to any living being, so fearful has been, and still is, my dread of being discovered by Edward Fairfax."

"I thank you for your confidence, Mrs. Fairfax. And now tell me what you propose to do. If I am officious, let me be excused when you remember that I have only twenty-four hours in which to act for you. My furlough has just expired."

"I do not know. I am so confused I cannot think clearly. Will you advise me?"

"And if so, I must seem impertinent, I fear, What are your qualifications? I mean for what are you adapted?"

"I could teach, I think. I have a good education, besides a thorough knowledge of French and music.

"How very fortunate. I have just received a letter from my cousin, Vance Northcroft, who has charge of a seminary some fifteen miles west of this place. His preceptress has recently married. The salary is not large, but sufficient for the wants of one woman. If you will accept the place I will give you a letter to him."

"I shall be only too grateful."

"And now, my friend," he said, rising, "I must bid you good-bye. I leave the city in twenty minutes. I hope you will be suited with the position Northcroft will give you. I might have offered you money, but I knew it would be rejected."

"I thank you for judging me so correctly. I do not want charity," she said proudly.

"No. And now, good-bye. I may never see you again: I am going where life is held by a frail thread; but something tells me that sometime we shall meet again, under circumstances more satisfactory.

He took her hand, bowed low over it, and left her alone.

* * * * *

The last final battle had been fought. The red clouds of smoke which hung over the heights were turning to a dull grey, for the sun had set and the gloom of early night was falling when Captain Westerly and a few detailed men were searching the field for the wounded. A heap of slain impeded their progress. Westerly saw, amid the grey, worn uniform, the glitter of epaulettes. He spoke to an orderly.

"Lend me a hand here, John; I think this man is living. A colonel, I should judge by his dress."

They lifted up the stalwart form—a man in the early prime of life, with the crimson blood gushing slowly from a wound in his side.

He swore when they moved him, but then it was no unusual thing for a wounded man to swear, and they gave it no heed, but bore him carefully to the temporary hospital erected for the wounded that were too badly hurt to be sent elsewhere.

Something about the dark, repellent face fascinated Yorke Westerly. He did not go out, but remained standing by while the surgeon looked at the wound.

"Well, doctor, what is to be expected?" he asked.

"Death within twelve hours," said the surgeon, wiping his probe; "there is an inward hœmorrhage."

The officer heard and opened his eyes.

"You think I'm done for, do you?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied the surgeon; "you will not see another sunrise."

An oath rose to the man's lips, quickly smothered in a moan of pain. Westerly approached him, and spoke gently as a woman.

"Is there nothing I can do for you. No friends to write to?"

"Blight friends!" he interrupted, coarsely; "they are a bore. No, there is no one in the world who feels any anxiety to know if I am dead or living."

"Your mother——" began Westerly.

"Hush! she died when I was an infant. I got my heart of fire and tempest from her. I have no relative. Somewhere in the world is a woman I made my wife, and I loved her; but you would call it a strange kind of love. But cruelly and brutally as I treated her, I would at any time have given my right hand to have heard her say 'Edward,' as I know she could have said it."

A light flashed upon the mind of Westerly.

"Will you tell me your name?" he asked.

"I am known as Edward Fairfax."

"And your wife was Helen Byrne?"

"Yes, do you know her?" his eyes flashed with something of their old, fierce light; "have you dared——"

He stopped abruptly, a stream of blood impeding his utterance.

He tossed his arms about, clutching the bedspread above him, and then lay back quiet. The purple hue of pain died out of his face and left it bronzed marble.

The soul of Edward Fairfax had passed the portals of Eternity.

Yorke Westerly took charge of the body, and at midnight it was laid in a grave his own men had prepared, and a board bearing the name of Colonel Edward Fairfax was placed to mark the spot.

A little later he came home.

People all remarked on it, and wondered that they had never before suspected how strongly Captain Westerly was attached to his cousin, Professor Northcroft.

School was out when he reached the seminary, and Helen was sitting on the piazza sewing.

How red her cheeks grew at the sight of him.

He took both her outstretched hands and drew her into the parlour before she spoke. Then he said:

"Helen—the time has come when I can call you Helen."

She looked at him inquiringly—doubt, fear and hope struggling together on her beautiful face.

"I do not understand, Captain Westerly."

"Helen, your husband is dead. The hand of Him has at last broken that unholy union."

She grew very pale, and put her hand to her forehead in a sort of composed manner, like one awakening from heavy sleep.

"Are you trifling with me, sir?"

"No, dear."

Evidently she did not notice the latter unusual word, for she only said:

"Heaven forbid that the death of any one of His creatures should make me glad."

She sat down and leaned her face on her folded arms. Westerly walked slowly back and forth across the floor. She lifted her face at last. There were tears in her eyes.

"I never thought to weep for him," she said; "but in his dreadful way I think he loved me. Perhaps He forgave him at the last."

Westerly spoke abruptly.

"Helen, you will think it neither time nor place to say what I am about to say, but circumstances must always be allowed. I love you; I have loved you from the very first moment I saw you. What will you say to me, Helen?"

He held her hands in his, and drew her close to him, so that he could look down into the sweet, blushing face, and into the clear, soft eyes.

"I can say yes, Mr. Westerly!"

In six months they were married. R. H.

FACETIÆ.

APPROPRIATE NAMES.

For a printer's wife, Em; for a sport's wife, Betty; for a lawyer's wife, Sue; for a teamster's wife; Carrie; for a fisherman's wife, Netty; for a shoemaker's wife, Peggy; for a carpet-man's wife, Mattie; for an auctioneer's wife, Biddy; for a chemist's wife, Ann Eliza; for an engineer's wife, Bridget; for a hatter's wife, Hattie.

A READY ANSWER.

In a little village in the North of Ireland lived two old inhabitants known by the names of Darby and Pat, each in their own way rather eccentric and always ready with their answers. The former was one day taking his usual walk, when he met his friend Pat, and asked, "What toime moight it be now?"

Pat, having a short stick in his hand, gave Darby a sharp crack over the head with it, and said:

"It's just shtruck wan."

Darby, looking up a little surprised, but always ready, said:

"Troth and it's a locky job I wasn't here an hour sooner!"

A young lady who did not believe in nature unadorned was epigrammatically dismissed by a female critic as follows: "She's only a chromo."

A SENSE OF PROPERTY.

Botanical Old Gent (in the Brighton Gardens): "Can you tell me, my good man, if this plant belongs to the 'Arbutus' family?"

Gardener (curtly): "No, sir, it doan't. It b'longs to the Corporation!" —Punch.

De Broglie's Doing.—The political situation in France—an imbroglio. —Punch.

A young English clergyman in a country parish recently revealed some of the secrets of the prison-house:

"Oh, there are four of us whose churches are neighbours, and we have a whist party every week, and the loser writes the Sunday sermons for the party."

DAMP GRASS.

Slavey: "Missis ses the milk's more than 'arf water, an' she'll have to deal sumwares else, if 'taint no better."

Milkman: "Well, my dear, you must tell your missis that I'm very sorry, but them cows of mine will eat damp grass, and I can't perwent 'em this weather."

A noted surgeon says that the reason women can't throw missiles as accurately as men is because their shoulder blades are set too far forward.

A SHY YOUNG MAN.

Mr. Kilpatrick selected as the hero of his story a shy young man of Scotland, who for fourteen years had wooed the lassie of his heart. One night, Jamie, for that was the young man's name, called to see Jennie, and there was a terrible look about his eyes, just as there is sometimes when they've made up their minds to pop the question. And Jamie came in and sat down by the fire, just as he had done every Tuesday and Friday night for fourteen long years, and he talked of the weather and the cattle and the crops, and the stock-market, I

was going to say—but no, they didn't talk about that. And finally Jamie says, "Jennie, I've known you for a long time now."

"Yes, Jamie," said she.

"And—I've thought I'd always like to—know you, Jennie."

"Y-e-s—Jamie."

"And so I've bought—a lot—Jennie."

"Y-e-s—J-a-m-i-e."

"So—that—when——"

"Yes—Jamie—yes."

"When we're dead we can lay our bones together!"

The idiot had gone and bought a lot in a graveyard. But Jennie wasn't discouraged. She knew her man well—after fourteen years she ought to—and so she said, gently, "Jamie."

"Yes, Jennie."

"Don't you think 'twould be better to lay our bones together while we're alive?"

A HOME THRUST.

DOCTOR: "Now tell me, colonel, how do you feel when you've killed a man?"

COLONEL: "Oh, very well; thank you, doctor,—how do you?"

IT is the duty of a gallant man always to pretend to believe everything a woman says, out of respect to her; and never to believe anything she says, out of respect to himself.

IF an Indian woman is a squaw, is an Indian baby necessarily a squawling?

"No one would take you for what you are," said an old-fashioned gentleman to a dandy, who had more hair than brains. "Why?" was immediately asked. "Because they cannot see your ears."

"IF one could change himself into any animal he pleased," said a pompous young man, "I think I should prefer to change myself into an ass. "That wouldn't be much of a change," sneered a satirical young lady.

"ARE you married, my dear?" asked an old gentleman of a pretty girl with whom he chanced to be sitting in a railroad carriage. "No," said she; "but I've sued a fellow for a breach of promise."

OUR TOURIST'S COMPANION.

(Being Particulars Omitted from most Guide-Books.)

IRELAND.

THERE are several hot springs at Boyle.

The "natest" town in "Ould Oireland" is Trim.

For a "lark" on the extreme "Q.T." there is no place like Sli-go.

Feather-beds are largely manufactured at Down.

The "straight tip" can always be had at Tipperary.

Money-lenders are plentiful at Athlone.

Wages are always good at Lough Erne.

There is no lack of "tin" at Lough Foyle.

Cork always "goes on swimmingly."

At Armagh there is an extensive armoury, and another at Swords Castle.

The fishermen at Lough Swilly are copious drinkers.

Beware of assault and battery at Knockmeledown.

Cahir is a "divil-may-Cahir" sort of place.

Ulster has an extensive cape projecting from it.

Go-a-head young ladies are plentiful at Bel(le)-fast.

School-children will not learn lessons at Connaught.

Limerick Races are generally the occasion of a "Munster Meeting." —Funny Folks.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOURS.—A miller's prices-current. —Funny Folks.

HER MAJESTY has been pleased to approve the appointment of the Rev. T. Valpy French, late Fellow of University College, Oxford, and for many years Head of the College at Lahore, to be the first Bishop of the newly-created See of Lahore.

STATISTICS.

FRENCH WHEAT CROP. — Mr. G. Gibson Richardson gives the following estimate of the wheat crop and consumption of wheaten bread in France, made in an article in the "Journal des Débats" of Friday, the 28th of September, signed by J. H. Johanet:—"The house of B. Estienne has just issued its annual estimate of the crop of wheat in France, and puts it at 32,600,000 quarters, which is 8,600,000 quarters below that of an abundant year. More recent information would lead us to put the crop at 34,300,000 quarters. The land sown with wheat last year was 17,500,000 acres; 34,300,000 quarters is enough for our consumption and for seed, provided the quality be good; but the consumption is by weight, not by measure. It is not the 29,200,000 quarters remaining after deducting the seed that we want, but 6,600,000 tons in weight, which would give us 6,200,000 tons of bread. This quantity of bread would be obtained from 29,200,000 quarters of the usual weight of our wheat, which is 62 2-5 lb. per bushel, we shall not get more than 5,200,000 tons of bread from the 29,200,000 quarters."

WILL YE COME TO ME, MARY?

WILL ye come tae me, Mary?
When Phœbus has gone,
When a's wrapt in slumber
Sae peacefully lone;
Will ye come when auld Nature
Has gane tae its rest,
And we'll walk through the meadows
Contentedly blessed.

Will ye come tae me, Mary?
I'll be 'neath the tree
Where aft I've been waiting
Wi' pleasure for thee;
And I'm sure ye'll be happy,
For then I will tell
What I've lang kept a secret
In some littlescell.

Sae ye'll come, little Mary,
When silence does reign,
Sae softly o'er mountain,
O'er greenwood and plain,
And it's happy we'll wander
Where murmurs the stream,
And I'll whisper the language
That a' lovers dream. S. B. N.

GEMS.

THE worst-hearted of enemies is too often to be dreaded than the most kind-hearted of friends.

THE bosom of the bad man is a desert, and the passion and vices are its tigers, and hyenas, and serpents.

A PLEASANT jest in time of misfortune is courage to the heart, strength to the arm, and digestion to the stomach.

PERFORM a good deed—speak a kind word—bestow a pleasant smile—and you will receive the same in return. The happiness you bestow upon others is reflected back to your own bosom.

How many suffer by unrequited affection! They are attached strongly to those who return them cold words, indifferent looks, and even avoid their presence. A word that might not otherwise be noticed often sinks deeply in the heart of one whose life is bound up in another.

HE who can irritate you whenever he likes is your master. You had better turn rebel, by learning the virtue of patience.

Kings never hear the voice of truth until they are dethroned, nor beauties until they have abdicated their charms.

THE electric light now illuminates Lyons Railway Station by means of twelve lamps. It is believed that 22-horse power will give the light of 2,400 gas-lamps using 100 litres an hour.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PICKLE CHOW-CHOW.—Quarter of a peck green tomatoes, quarter of a peck white onions, quarter of a peck pickling beans, one dozen green cucumbers, one dozen green peppers, one large head of cabbage. Season with mustard, celery seed, salt, to suit the taste. Cover the mixture with best cider vinegar. Boil two hours slowly, continually stirring, and add two tablespoonfuls sweet oil while hot.

LADY FINGERS.—Rub half a pound of butter into a pound of sugar; grate in the rind of two lemons, squeeze in the juice of one; then add three eggs; make it into a roll the size of the middle finger; it will spread in the oven to a thin cake; dip in chocolate icing.

TOMATO CATSUP.—I. Put one peck of ripe tomatoes in halves, boil them in a porcelain kettle until the pulp is all dissolved, then strain them well through a hair sieve and set the liquor on to boil, adding one ounce of salt, one of mace, one tablespoonful of black pepper, one teaspoonful red pepper, one tablespoonful ground cloves, five of ground mustard; let them all boil together for five or six hours, and stir them most of the time. Let the mixture stand eight or ten hours in a cool place, add one pint of vinegar, and then bottle it; seal the corks and keep in a cool, dark place.

II. Take one gallon peeled tomatoes, four pods of red pepper; cook until tender and strain through a coarse sieve; then stir in thoroughly four tablespoonfuls of salt, four tablespoonfuls of ground black pepper, three tablespoonfuls of white mustard-seed, half a tablespoonful of alspice, and one pint of vinegar; simmer slowly three or four hours; bottle while hot, and cork tight and the preparation will keep good for years. It can also be made in winter time by using canned tomatoes and dried red pepper-pods.

LEMON PIE WITH FROSTING.—Take one cup of sugar, the yolks of three eggs, one cup of milk, two teaspoonfuls of corn flour, the juice and grated peel of one lemon. Beat the yolks very light, add the sugar, rub the corn flour in with the milk, and add that and then the cinnamon, and beat well together—this will make one pie. Line a pie-dish with a rich paste, and then fill with the custard, and bake. When done, take the white of three eggs, and beat them with a tablespoonful of sugar to a stiff froth, which spread over the top, and brown in the oven.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Two additional peers will be entitled to take their seats at the meeting of Parliament, viz., the Earl of Ranfurly and Baron Windsor, the former of whom attained his majority on August 14 last, and the latter on the 27th following.

THE names of their Royal Highnesses Prince Albert Victor and Prince George of Wales appear in the last issue of the "Navy List" as naval cadets, their commissions bearing date from the 5th of June. The young princes are entitled to pay at the rate of £18 5s. per annum, one shilling a day.

HEAVY GRAPES.—A remarkable bunch of grapes was shown at the Penrith Horticultural Show on Wednesday week, by Mr. Leslie, gardener, Springkell. It weighed 9lbs. 8ozs., and was heavier by some ounces than any shown at the International show. Besides gaining the ordinary prize, the committee gave it an extra prize of 10s.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD CANTEEN.—The word "canteen" has had a curious history. It is perhaps the only word in our language, which, originally English, passed into a foreign tongue, and was afterwards taken back in a modified form. As originally spoken by the Saxons it was tin can, but the Gaul, as is his wont, placing the noun before the adjective, and pronouncing the letter i as e, brought it out as can tin, pronounced canteen.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TO OUR READERS.—To avoid misapprehension we have made a slight alteration in the title of one of our stories, the continuation of which will appear as A WOMAN SPURNED instead of A WOMAN SCORNED, which latter we have discovered is the name of a book already published. Amidst the multiplicity of works of fiction now in existence it is not singular that two authors should select the same title, but as far as possible we endeavour to obviate such coincidences or to remedy them should they occur.

C. C.—Adopt the treatment recommended for bunions to "Dusty," in No. 738.

EUGENIE.—1. Colour of enclosed hair light brown of a fine texture. It would look very pretty tied with blue. 2. Six ounces of tincture of Peruvian bark and half an ounce of sal ammoniac well shaken together before using may remove the tartar from the teeth, which should be rubbed by a finger dipped in the mixture, and afterwards rinsed with warm water. But perhaps the best way would be to apply to an experienced dentist, say H. U. Olver, 76, High Street, Borough, S.E. 3. Penmanship very good, though masculine. "Viola's" writing is also very good, and more feminine. On this account alone it is slightly the better of the two, but both are far above the average quality that reaches us.

MOSS ROSE.—1. Fresh air and exercise will do all that is necessary to improve our correspondent's complexion and make her eyes larger and brighter, while the eyebrows may be shapened satisfactorily, if that is possible, by passing the fingers over them occasionally. A little elder-flower water applied to the face now and then would do no harm. 2. Writing would be good with practice.

A CONSTANT READER.—1. A good hair-wash may be made of one ounce of borax and half an ounce of camphor powdered fine and dissolved in a quart of boiling water. 2. How long it will take you to learn music depends upon your capacity, zeal, age, facilities for good tuition and practice, and what you mean by "music." Under a competent teacher a pupil may hope with perseverance to perform upon the piano, for instance, a simple set of quadrilles in three months, but to sing or play at sight long and earnest endeavour is requisite, while the thorough mastery of harmony is a still more arduous task. 3. Writing not at all good.

MAGGIE G.—There is nothing to pay.

A READER'S penmanship is very bad indeed, and orthography no better—"twenty," "curiositey," for instance. No charge is made for such advertisements.

A CONSTANT READER (Devonport).—In all probability if you attempted to dye the dress yourself failure would be the result. Send it to those who make such matters their business.

INQUIRER.—If our correspondent will send a personal description it will be inserted in the usual way—free of charge.

FOOL.—We are not likely to be in want of any contributions from a "fool."

AN OLD HAMBURGER informs us that "the parents of Mdlle. Tietjens were both born in St. Pauli, where their parents had been born," that "Tietjens is a real German and no Hungarian name, and very common all over North Germany, especially on the coasts of the German Sea," and that "there is no reason to suppose that any of Mdlle. Tietjen's forefathers came from Hungary."

GRACE R.—1. Under proper escort a lady may go to a skating-rink, but we should not like to decide upon the "respectability" of every such place of amusement. 2. Surely you know, without asking us, how to pronounce "absorbed." 3. Writing not good—orthography and construction quite correct.

A DISTRESSED MOTHER.—If married in the name by which he was generally known there is no illegality in it.

S. B. N.—We shall be glad to hear from you from time to time.

JOHN W.—No charge is made.

H. R.—One of the two policies in your case is null and void. The company would and could successfully dispute a claim on both in the event of your decease. There are certain conditions affecting security of property under which more than one policy on a single life is allowed by law, but these seem to be wanting as far as you are concerned.

Z. G.—The volume in your possession must be a Rotterdam reprint of "Harvey's Circulation of the Blood," or rather "The Anatomical Exercises of Dr. William Harvey Concerning the Motion of the Heart and Blood." It appears to be the fourth edition. We have referred to a copy of it in 12mo in the British Museum collection, which likewise contains amongst others a London 8vo edition, also including Back's Discourse, published in 1653.

PRIMROSE, VIOLET, and DAISY, three friends, wish to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Primrose is eighteen, tall, golden hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Violet is twenty-four, dark hair and eyes, medium height, fond of home. Daisy is twenty-five, brown hair, hazel eyes, good-looking. All are thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be between twenty and thirty, tall, fond of home, good-looking, loving.

FRED and NED, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Fred is dark, tall, good-looking. Ned is fair, tall, good-looking. Respondents must be about seventeen.

VIOLET, twenty-four, medium height, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty, with a view to matrimony. Must be tall, and fond of home.

C. C., an officer in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-one, fond of home, music, and children.

FLORRY G., eighteen, tall, auburn hair, dark brown eyes, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman, tall, dark, and of a very loving disposition.

MINNIE M. and CHARLOTTE W., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty. Minnie is nineteen, brown hair and eyes. Charlotte is nineteen, tall, fair.

H. S. O., M. N. O., and C. U. S. O., three seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. H. S. O. is twenty-four, medium height, light hair, fond of home and children. M. N. O. is twenty-five, medium height, fair, dark brown hair, fond of home, music, and dancing. C. U. S. O. is twenty-four, tall, curly hair, good-looking, fond of home and dancing.

LONELY LIZZIE, nineteen, fair, dark brown hair, good-looking, would like to exchange carte-de-visite with a young man about twenty-two.

C. G., R. G., and D. G., three friends, wish to correspond with three young gentlemen. C. G. is twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes. R. G. is eighteen, tall, fair, light brown hair, blue eyes. D. G. is seventeen, tall, fair.

THE MOURNED ONE.

THEN let me weep 'neath cypress shade;
Oh! let me mourn my loss of thee;
For thou art from my presence laid
Beneath the weeping willow tree.

For now to dust, thy form so fair
Has vanish'd from my earthly view;
No face I see! My love can share,
But mourning fills mine eyes with new.

Oh! wert thou living as before
To all those happy times gone by;
I'd glad recall the days of yore,
And turn my sadness into joy.

But all my hopes and tears are vain—
Naught can restore thee to my sight;
No comfort can my soul sustain,
I'm lone and gloomy as the night." F. S.

MOLL and BET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Moll is twenty, tall, dark hair and eyes. Bet is nineteen, auburn hair, dark, brown eyes.

MARIE, nineteen, light hair, light blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man of medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

FLYING BOWMAN, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. He is twenty-three.

MAY, nineteen, golden hair, dark brown eyes, medium height, wishes to correspond with a tall young gentleman.

IVY and MYRTLE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Ivy is nineteen, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, fair. Myrtle is eighteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, fair, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be tall, dark hair and eyes.

W. C. T., eighteen, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Must be good-tempered.

F. C., twenty-four, a signalman in the Royal Navy, medium height, dark eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady.

TWO HALF NITCHES, a seaman in the Royal Navy, dark, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

HARRY H. and FRED M., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Harry is twenty-five. Fred is twenty-two.

JAMES, eighteen, brown hair, hazel eyes, good-looking, fair, good-tempered, would like to correspond with a young woman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about the same age, brown hair, blue eyes, fair. Domestic preferred.

EMILY, seventeen, good-looking, brown hair, violet eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be eighteen, handsome, of a loving disposition, fond of music and society.

JACK, eighteen, good-looking, brown hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

TOMMY E., seventeen, grey eyes, fair, considered good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about sixteen. Respondent must be fair, fond of home, blue eyes.

L. A. F., twenty-four, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady.

ALICE and LINDA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Alice has dark hair and eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children. Linda is tall, good-looking, of a loving disposition.

NELLIE and ANNIE would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Nellie is twenty-three, fair, blue eyes. Annie is seventeen, brown hair and eyes, tall, dark. Respondents must be twenty, dark.

TRUE LOVER'S KNOT, SPRITSAIL SHEET KNOT, and FISHERMAN'S BEND, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. True Lover's Knot is twenty-one, fair, good-looking. Spritsail Sheet Knot is nineteen, fond of home, of a loving disposition. Fisherman's Bend is twenty, tall, handsome, fond of home and music.

MAIN ROYAL TOM and FORE ROYAL JACK, two sailors in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Main Royal Tom is twenty-three, blue eyes, dark, good-looking. Fore Royal Jack is twenty, dark, hazel eyes.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

CLARICE C. is responded to by—H. G. S., nineteen, tall, dark hair.

TED by—Emma, twenty-two, fair, of a loving disposition.

FRED by—Jemima, twenty, medium height, dark, and loving.

HARRY by—Katie, twenty-one, medium height, fond of home, loving.

BOB by—Ann B., twenty-three, domesticated, fond of home and music.

W. W. by—Maria, twenty-four, rather tall, fair, fond of home.

PAT M. by—Kate, twenty-one, medium height, fond of music, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated.

JACK by—Myrtle, seventeen.

TED by—Holly, nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, considered good-looking.

HARRY by—Ivy, eighteen, tall, thoroughly domesticated.

MABEL C. by—Alfred S. K., twenty-four, and good-looking.

LONELY ANNIE by—Harry, twenty-five, medium height, fair.

LIMBER UP by—Ria, twenty-two, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home and children.

FRANK by—Madge, twenty-four, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated.

ROB by—T. T., seventeen, tall, fair.

M. D. by—Milly, twenty-one, medium height, fair, blue eyes.

MAUD W. by—Jack, twenty-six, fond of home, medium height.

BILL by—Maggie, medium height, brown hair and blue eyes.

TOM by—Marie, brown hair, blue eyes, and of medium height.

BOB by—Eliza, twenty, dark hair and eyes, considered good-looking.

IRENE by—George, twenty-three, dark hair and eyes, fond of music.

BOW FENDER by—Martha, twenty, fair, of a loving disposition.

WALTER by—Allie, medium height, fair, blue eyes, curly hair, good-tempered.

HARRY by—Florrie, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

BILL by—Nellie, twenty-five, dark hair, tall, fond of home.

TOM by—Polly, twenty-two, fair, fond of home, good-tempered.

BOB by—Lena, twenty, tall, fair, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home and children.

VIOLET by—Alexander, twenty-four, brown hair, blue eyes.

HOOK by—Agnes, eighteen, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

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London: Published for the Proprietors at 334, Strand, by A. SMITH & Co.